NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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SIEGFRIED KRACAUER, author of *Ginster,* a novel, and *Orpheus in Paris,* a book on Offenbach, was until recently a member of the staff of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library. He has for some years been engaged in research on the political significance and history of the German film.

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We are sure that our readers will be interested to know that, beginning with the January-February 1947 issue, PARTISAN REVIEW is being published simultaneously in England and the United States. The British edition is being published and distributed by *Horizon* in collaboration with Percy Lund Humphries, Ltd. This marks the first time an American literary magazine has had a separate foreign publication.

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THE FUTURE OF SOCIALISM: II

On Attitudes and Ideas

GRANVILLE HICKS

Pre-Marxian socialism issued from the marriage of humanitarianism and rationalism. The utopian socialists thought of a continuous revolution: the ideals of liberty and equality to which the bourgeoisie had appealed in its fight against feudal privilege were to be realized in a socialist commonwealth. Increased confidence in the human reason, also a part of the bourgeois revolution, encouraged them to elaborate plans for the perfect state. To convert the people, only practical demonstration was necessary: hence New Lanark and New Harmony, Brook Farm, Oneida, and the North American Phalanx.

"Reason," wrote Engels, "became the sole measure of everything. . . . Every form of society and government then existing, every old traditional notion was flung into the lumber room as irrational; the world had hitherto allowed itself to be led solely by prejudices; everything in the past deserved only pity and contempt. Now, for the first time, appeared the light of day, the kingdom of reason; henceforth superstition, injustice, privilege, oppression, were to be superseded by eternal truth, eternal right, equality based on nature and the inalienable rights of man."

The ideas of the utopian socialists were put into circulation at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. In spite of these ideas, the first four decades of the century were filled with war, poverty, and oppression. Something had gone wrong, and Marx and Engels, coming to maturity in the forties, were prepared to say what it was. In the first place, they argued, the development of society was not determined by rational theories but by the operation of laws analogous to the laws of physics and chemistry. In the second place, theories were themselves the product of a particular social situation, not the absolute achievement of an unfettered intellect. "The historical situation," Engels stated, "also dominated the founders of socialism. . . . The solution of the social problems, which as yet lay hidden in un-

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developed economic conditions, the utopians attempted to evolve out of the human brain."

To understand Marxism, we must understand its genesis. Marx and Engels *wanted* socialism as intensely as Saint-Simon, Fourier, or Owen, but forty years of utopianism had convinced them of the futility of drawing up "rational" schemes of social organization and attempting to float them by exhortation and example. Imagine, then, the satisfaction they felt when they became convinced that the operation of social and economic laws would inexorably bring about precisely the end they desired. We miss the whole point if we think of them as devitalized scholars probing dispassionately into the laws of social change. They were socialists to begin with, and they found what they wanted to find.

Engels himself lets us see the slightness of the clues that started them on their way to their vast conclusions: "In 1831, the first working-class rising took place in Lyons; between 1838 and 1842, the first national working-class movement, that of the English Chartists, reached its height. . . . The new facts made imperative a new examination of all past history. Then it was seen that *all* past history, with the exception of its primitive stages, was the history of class struggles." It was Marx, of course, with his Hegelian training, who made the breathtaking leap to this final generalization. It was not enough for him to find a force—i.e., the proletariat—that could and inevitably would achieve socialism; he had to sanctify this discovery by relating it to an even more sweeping generalization about the dynamics of all history.

The immediate and very desirable effect of Marx's work was to concentrate the attention of socialists on the analysis of social processes. One can refuse to accept the dogma of Marxist infallibility and still be greatly in Marx's debt. If his economic theories are sometimes cloudy, his historical writings are brilliantly clear. The chapter of *Capital* called "Primary Accumulation" is one of the great examples of his insight. Two other chapters, "The Working Day" and "Capitalist Accumulation," taken with Engels' earlier *Conditions of the Working Class,* give an unforgettable account of life in the first stages of industrial capitalism. And such inspired pamphlets as *The Civil War in France* and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* take us below the surface to see the forces at work in the political struggles of the mid-nineteenth century.

If, however, Marx's preoccupation with historical processes has given us a great intellectual heritage, it must also be held responsible

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for certain of the vital shortcomings of organized socialism. Marx and Engels ridiculed the speculations of the utopians. They were "scientific" socialists, and it was beneath their dignity to try to read the future. They were content to demonstrate that capitalism must decay and that the proletariat must come to power. They did point out that, since there would be no class for the proletariat to exploit, it would be forced to create a classless society, but they were so frightened of utopianism that they refused to think about the transition from the socialist revolution to the perfect socialist state. Lenin, for somewhat different reasons, was quite as hostile to speculation, and when, on the verge of the Russian Revolution, he paused to ask himself what might be expected if the revolution succeeded, he could only reaffirm the original Marxist abstractions. *The State and Revolution* has its sharp insights, but one cannot help feeling that it is primarily a plea for faith. Lenin was too much of a realist not to know that vast disorders would accompany and follow the revolution, and he wanted to strengthen his comrades by convincing them that their goal would eventually and inevitably be won.

This refusal to be concerned with the character of socialist society has had extraordinary consequences in the decades since the Russian Revolution. Marx and Engels taught that if the first step were taken—the expropriation of the expropriators, the socialization of the means of production—all other things would follow. Since the Bolsheviks did socialize the means of production, orthodox Marxists were bound to conclude that the Soviet Union was a socialist state and could not help but develop into a classless society. Hence not only have the Stalinists justified every phase of Soviet foreign and domestic policy; the Trotskyites, after criticizing Soviet policy from top to bottom, have insisted on the defense of the socialist fatherland. Moreover, countless liberals and progressives, many of them perfectly sincere, have persisted, despite repeated disillusionment, in the belief that Russia is somehow on their side.

There is a kind of double inflexibility in the Marxist-Leninist tradition. There is, first, the simple and obvious inflexibility that leads Stalinists and some other self-styled Marxists to regard as heresy any questioning of any part of the Marxist canon. But there is also a subtler and less commonly recognized type of inflexibility: it is "un-Marxist" to state explicitly the ends of socialism and thus make them a usable criterion of socialist actions. If Stalinists are asked how they can be sure that the means they employ will lead to the ends they desire, they insist that they are interested not in means and ends but

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in historical processes. Unfortunately the idea of the inevitability of socialism fits in with the idea of progress—of which it is, of course, a special variation—and thus it happens that many men of good will accept the dogma almost as readily as the Stalinists themselves. They believe, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, that the whole world is progressing toward socialism—not merely socialism in the sense of the government ownership of the means of production, but socialism in the sense of the just, equal, peaceful, fruitful, good society.

If nearly thirty years of socialized production has not achieved the ultimate ends of socialism in Russia, and if, as many of us have been forced to conclude, the movement of Russian society is away from justice, equality, freedom, and peace, not toward them, then certainly the case for the inevitability of socialism ought to be re-examined. And if we decide that Marx was wrong, we should also re-examine our goals and the means by which we propose to reach them.

II

This is not the place in which to discuss Marxist economics, and for our purposes it does not matter much whether or not the theory of surplus value is fallacious. There are, however, three main Marxist contentions to be scrutinized: that capitalism is bound sooner or later to collapse; that the proletariat is the inevitable heir of capitalism; that the proletariat will establish a classless society.

So far as the collapse of capitalism is concerned, we may as well dodge the question of its inevitability and content ourselves with asking what has happened in the years since Marx's prophecies were made. It seems clear enough that capitalism, certainly the capitalism of the classical economists, is dying. In every country of the world larger and larger areas of the economic life have been taken away from private enterprise. Revolution in the Marxist sense has taken place only in Russia, but socialization, in varying degrees, has taken place everywhere. From the strict Marxist point of view, this socialization is merely a capitalist dodge, but it seems more accurate to say that it is forced upon the capitalists, who like it only as anyone likes the proverbial half-loaf. Monopoly has increased, as Marx predicted it would, but the victims, instead of banding together to destroy capitalism *in toto,* have supported measures of control supposed to alleviate the evil. In the same way, severe depressions have occurred in accordance with Marxist theory, but they have been met by large-scale government

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measures involving the expansion of governmental control. Except in Russia, where capitalism was not far advanced, there has not been a complete capitalist collapse, but in most countries a weakened capitalism shares power with a greatly strengthened government. In Nazi Germany capitalists survived only as they came to terms with men whose power was political rather than financial, and British capitalists may find themselves in the same position. Only in this country is finance capital strong enough to challenge government directly, and even here finance capital was on the defensive for fourteen years. To try to explain away these facts by calling government the tool of the capitalists is to miss the significance of a far-reaching historical trend.

As for the proletariat, the fact is clear that it has not come to power as a result of capitalist decay. In Germany, in the early thirties, capitalism was perilously weak, and there were strong parties that claimed to lead the proletariat in the name of Karl Marx; but power came into the hands of a relatively small group of persons, most of them lower-middle-class intellectuals. What is even more significant, the group that holds power in the Soviet Union, though of course it claims to rule in the interests of the laboring masses, is only less remote from the proletariat than was the Tsarist aristocracy. Not only does this group enjoy a multitude of privileges; it controls a vast machinery for imposing its will on the majority of the people. Many of its members are not proletarians in their origins, and they are not proletarian in their way of life or their interests.

As a disillusioned Belgian Marxist, Henry de Man, pointed out more than twenty years ago, Marx shaped his conception of the working class to fit the role it was required to play in his scheme of things. Look at the picture of the proletarian in the Communist Manifesto: he has no property; he has no family life; he has been "stripped of every trace of national character"; to him law, morality, and religion are "just so many bourgeois prejudices." This is not the worker we have known in America, nor can it be argued that such a proletarian as Marx describes has ever or anywhere been representative. Moreover, it is doubtful if a completely degraded proletariat would be capable of making a revolution. Revolutionary leadership, as a rule, has come either from the middle class or from the upper strata of the proletariat, not from those workers who are most exploited.

There is a vast amount of discontent in the world, but it is not peculiar to the proletariat, and it is not merely economic in its origins. To be sure, there is dissatisfaction with economic conditions, but it is

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augmented by all sorts of psychological and moral discontents. Recent studies have indicated that factory workers are troubled by the meaninglessness of their work as much as by low pay, and that unions are important not only as they improve working conditions but also because they give the individual member a sense of purpose. The dissatisfactions of the German middle class, which played so large a part in the rise of Nazism, can be attributed to frustrations that were in considerable degree noneconomic. To many persons, probably including most of the readers of this article, the values of capitalism are morally unacceptable even when the capitalist system is economically at its peak. In short, the revolutionary forces in the contemporary world do not grow exclusively out of economic exploitation, and it cannot be assumed that the proletariat is the only revolutionary class or even that the proletariat as a whole is a revolutionary class.

The proletariat is not certain or even likely to come to power as capitalism collapses. Observation shows that the usual consequence of the breakdown of capitalism is the strengthening of the state. But where, in the strengthened state, does power reside? "The politically dominant class," wrote de Man, "is the one whose members exercise the functions of political domination"—in other words, the bureaucrats and the politicians.

In *The Managerial Revolution* James Burnham recognized the growing power of the bureaucrats and politicians in the post-capitalist world, but both he and de Man, who in some ways anticipated him, tried to fit this phenomenon into a modified Marxist system. Burnham's acceptance of the Marxist ideology leads him to speak of the managerial class, but the managers are not a class in the Marxist sense. It is better to discard the whole Marxist terminology and to admit that the collapse of capitalism has brought consequences unforseen by Marx. As Toynbee points out, the rise of nationalism is no less important in the history of Western civilization than the rise of capitalism. As capitalism has failed to keep its promises, people have turned to the national state, with the consequent rise of the demagogue and the manipulator. It is instructive that the leader of one of the two great totalitarian powers was a demagogue par excellence while the leader of the other is the adroitest of political bosses.

In the face of these facts, talk of the inevitability of the classless society becomes nonsense. Even if such a thing as a thoroughly class-conscious and united proletariat could exist, it would have to administer the state through the medium of bureaucrats and politicians. ("Persons who do not wish to have any bureaucrats," de Man wrote,

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"should not set up offices. If the masses want to engage in political activities, they must have politicians.") So far as the Marxist scheme of things is concerned, there is nothing the proletariat can do to control the politicians and bureaucrats. Lenin, it is true, did try to provide a kind of check by limiting the salaries of functionaries to the level of wages paid skilled labor, but this check did not last long, and today the luxuries enjoyed by Communist Party functionaries are a cause for scandal not only in the Soviet Union but also, since World War II, in satellite countries such as Yugoslavia. Politicians and bureaucrats, in other words, behave like politicians and bureaucrats, not like the heroes of some proletarian novel.

Nearly thirty years ago Spengler predicted that the socialism toward which the world was moving would resemble "not Marx's theory but Frederick William I's Prussian practice which long preceded Marx and will yet displace him." In our time we have seen the authoritarian state arrived at by the Communist route and by the fascist route, and if we can discern any general historical tendency, it is a trend toward totalitarianism.

III

If we do not wish to be swept along by the tendency toward totalitarianism, we must become nay-sayers. To begin with, we had better get rid of any remnants of belief in progress. My generation was brought up on the straight Victorian idea of progress—"the progress of mankind onward and upward forever," as the Unitarians phrase it. Many of us were weaned away from this belief in the period after World War I, both by experience and by exposure to European pessimism. In the thirties, however, we fell for the Marxian version of the idea. Marxism does not affirm the idea of progress as such, and the concept of dialectical materialism allows for ups and downs, but Marxism, as I have pointed out, does assert that impersonal historical forces will inevitably achieve the good society. This is the notion we must put aside. I think we must develop a theory of history that rests on firmer foundations than dialectical materialism, but whether we do that or not, the facts of the present situation force us to abandon the myth of inevitability.

In the second place, and more concretely, we shall have to view with skepticism any program that advocates the socialization of the means of production without simultaneously proposing practical measures for the control of the bureaucracy that socialization makes nec-

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essary. I do not think that such measures can be easily devised, for more is at stake than the holding of elections and plebiscites, and genuinely popular participation in government becomes more difficult as government becomes more deeply involved in economic affairs. We cannot take a dogmatic stand against the nationalization of basic industries or even against large-scale socialization, for socialization may be preferable to the chaos of an unplanned economy or the tyranny of monopoly control; but we can refuse to deceive ourselves about the consequences. The prevention of evil is one thing; the creation of good is another.

Discussions of the problem of ends and means frequently assume that both means and ends are simple, isolated entities. In practice, however, human ends are never simple, and they are never fully stated and, for that matter, never fully understood. Furthermore, any human act has not one but many consequences. Those who insist that the end justifies the means and those who condemn certain means as absolutely wrong are guilty of the same error. Our task is to discover, as well as we can amid all the complexities and contingencies of human society, the means that will achieve the ends we desire. In particular we must recognize that an action may be necessary without being good. It may have been necessary—I think it was—to meet the force of German fascism with armed force, but it was folly to believe that the successful suppression of Nazism would, in itself, produce peace or democracy. Persons who are concerned with achieving mass action naturally invoke as many sanctions as possible, and raise all kinds of hope, careless of the disillusionment that will certainly follow. Marxists are peculiarly guilty on this score, since they are committed to the idea of doing evil that good may come. We must avoid this confusion, and yet our clear perception of the consequences of evil actions must not lead us into the paralysis of absolutism. Rather we should do what has to be done, but without self-deception. Though destruction may be a prerequisite, a good society can only be the result of creative effort.

If this seems to be a rather bleak view of our dilemma, so much the better. Many Leftists are so afraid of being called pessimists that they fail to reckon with the difficulties of their tasks and thus doom themselves to defeat. The kind of optimism that is worked up in Communist and neo-liberal circles makes straight thinking impossible. That is why the writings of certain religious authors—Toynbee, Niebuhr, Eliot—are so often more impressive than the writings of radicals and liberals. Orthodox Christianity at the very least presents a

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view of human nature that is not flagrantly at odds with the facts we have experienced in these recent decades.

It is unnecessary, however, to accept the dogma of original sin in order to explain the human predicament. Human beings, as a rule, have not reached a state of development suitable for living in a complex world society. This is a matter of everybody's observation and experience. The more one knows of the men who are running the world's affairs, the more clearly one sees that they are not up to the job they are trying to do. As for the intellectuals, their writings testify daily to their sense of their own inadequacy. Nor is this state of affairs surprising. Mankind required hundreds of thousands of years to reach the stage of social and technical development that we know as civilization. Moreover, even in the six thousand years or so since the race emerged from the stone age, the majority of people have lived in small communities and under conditions that changed but little in a lifetime. It is no wonder that we have difficulty in coping with a constantly changing technology and the system of worldwide economic relationships it has created. It will take time for men to learn to think and act as members of a world society, and there may not be time enough.

All this is a commonplace, but it is the kind of commonplace many intellectuals find it convenient to ignore. I do not say that Western civilization is doomed, for I do not know and I think no one else does, but it is fatuous not to take the possibility of failure into account. One of the things that make so many radicals seem superficial and even silly is their conviction that a remedy can be found for any evil if they succeed in working up enough excitement. I know that skepticism may be an excuse for doing nothing, but we do not have to be pushed into foolish actions just because some people are smug. The neo-liberals tell us that it is later than we think, but that makes it all the more important for us not to waste time in doing the wrong things.

IV

In their preliminary statement the editors of PARTISAN REVIEW assume that there can be—and, indeed, is—such a thing as a nonsocialist Left. Of course they are right, but how, then, are we to define Leftism? Are we to say that nonsocialist Leftists are merely individuals who once embraced socialism in some form or other, have since rejected it, but refuse to surrender the name of Leftist though they have given up the substance? Many of the persons who think of themselves or are

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thought of by the editors of PARTISAN REVIEW as unaffiliated Leftists were at one time Communists or Communist sympathizers, for Communism swept through a whole generation with devastating effect. What these Leftists have in common, however, is not the fact that they are ex-Communists but rather certain attitudes that made them susceptible to Communism in the first place. That is, they are united in their profound dissatisfaction with existing society, in their realization that not only the intellectuals but all classes of people suffer from the defects of the social order, in their adherence to conceptions of the good life that have been evolved in the course of mankind's six thousand years of experience with civilization, and in their sense of personal responsibility for present and future. On some such basis a group of unaffiliated Leftists, some of whom continue to call themselves socialists and some of whom do not, can be clearly distinguished.

This kind of Leftism rests ultimately on a conception of what is right and what is wrong. The superficial Victorian idea of morality has been so thoroughly overhauled by anthropology, psychology, and Marxian economics and history that the very word is discredited, but you only have to pick up any piece of Left propaganda, from the *Manifesto* to the latest election leaflet of either the Communists or the Socialists, to see how dependent Leftists have been and are on a moral appeal. The strength of socialism—in the most comprehensive sense of the term—has always been a moral strength. It has not only denounced the oppressors as immoral; it has buoyed up the morale—significant word—of the oppressed by saying, "The right is on your side."

Yet Marx's skepticism about the moral appeal has its justification. The bourgeois revolutionaries talked with the most pious fervor about moral standards, but when they had won the economic and political advantages they were seeking, many of them were able to forget that their moral aims had not been realized. The formulation and certainly the application of moral standards, Marx saw, were bound to be influenced by self-interest and class-interest. But instead of trying to discover how material interests and ideas of right and wrong interacted, he based his theories on class-interest while remaining in practice an indignantly moral man and appealing to the morality of his contemporaries.

One of the principal tasks for unaffiliated Leftists today is the rehabilitation of morality. Marx is by no means solely responsible for our moral confusion, but his guilt is large. While availing himself of all the moral prestige that utopian socialism, the bourgeois revolution,

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and even earlier radical movements had acquired, he made it clear to his followers that they were not bound by the moral standards on which they called. He left a tremendous loophole, and Stalinism is one of the things that crawled through it. If Stalinists were thoroughgoing Machiavellians, they would be dangerous enough, but they are something worse, for they have a self-convincing moral justification for every immorality they commit. Capitalism has contributed mightily to the degradation of morality, but it is Stalinism—acting, I am afraid, on good Marxist precedent—that has undone the Left.

The rehabilitation of morality might begin with self-analysis. That is, the individual Leftist might state his ideas of the good society as explicitly as he can and then try to discover whence they derive. For the average intellectual today, this is like baring one's secret sins, but perhaps we are unnecessarily shamefaced about it. Anthropology, which has done so much to make relativists of us, does not hesitate to point out that one form of social organization makes for more fruitful living than another. Psychology cannot get along without a conception of the healthy human being. History shows how often fashions in morality have changed, but it also calls attention to the persistence of certain ideas of the good life through four or five millennia. To be sure, morality is and must be relative, but we need not despair of finding standards that are relevant to our times. Indeed, as I have already suggested, there is considerable tacit agreement as to the ends of Leftist endeavor; what is necessary is that we should bring them into the open, criticize and revise them, and then use the results as criteria in our choice of means.

My concern here is not with the formulation of concrete programs, but something can be said about general attitudes. Any program has to take into account both what is desirable and what is possible. Of the two Leftist positions today that seem to me tenable, one emphasizes the possible and the other the desirable. The former may be called critical liberalism and the latter intransigent radicalism.

Intransigent radicalism—as expounded, for example, by Dwight Macdonald in *Politics*—takes its stand resolutely in favor of what the individual believes to be good, and will be satisfied with nothing else. It is unqualifiedly critical not only of the shortcomings of capitalism but also of anything less than an ideal socialism. It is intolerant of any form or degree of compromise, and is antipragmatic in temper. When the intransigent radical takes part in organizations, he is usually a schismatic. His natural tendency is away from organizations, as

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Macdonald says, and toward anarchism. He may become a martyr, and he is at any rate a gadfly.

The critical liberal is no less aware than the intransigent radical of the deficiencies of existing systems, and he probably does not quarrel fundamentally with the radical in his conception of the good society. However, he thinks the possible is worth achieving, even though it may fall short of the desirable. Critical liberalism has nothing except a few phrases in common with the neo-liberalism of the *New Republic* and *PM*, and, as the late Morris Cohen demonstrated in both theory and practice, it has only an historical connection with the laissez-faire liberalism of the nineteenth century. It does, however, claim descent from the great body of "reasonable" reformers in the past. Although the critical liberal is aware of the limitations of reason, he sees reason as our best reliance. What the critical liberal lacks in the way of dramatic boldness, he can make up for by persistence.

In choosing between intransigent radicalism and critical liberalism, the individual is likely to be influenced by temperament. The dangers of each position are obvious. Committed to actual or at least apparent ineffectiveness, and isolated by his fanaticism from the majority of mankind, the radical may lapse into a schizoid existence. The liberal, on the other hand, may come to regard compromise as an end in itself, and may succumb to the lethargy and smugness that have brought so much discredit on the name of liberalism. Neither of the two positions, however, can be condemned because of the excesses to which it may lead. In their best expressions the two attitudes complement each other, and both can contribute to an effective Left.

There is one consideration that is important, though it may not be decisive. One of the many evils of our society is the gulf that exists between intellectuals and nonintellectuals. This is an evil for the intellectuals and for society as a whole. Intransigent radicalism widens that gulf, for the behavior of the radical bewilders and antagonizes people, and the radical never has a chance to find out why other people act as they do. Critical liberalism, on the other hand, at least provides a basis for co-operation, since liberals are never indifferent to the possible and are willing to work with people as they find them. If the individual believes as I have come to believe, that communication between intellectuals and nonintellectuals is badly needed, he is likely to feel strongly the advantages of liberalism.

The clarification of attitudes seems to me more important at the moment than the discussion of organizations. I should like to see a new party, unqualifiedly democratic, unsparingly critical of the evils

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of capitalism but not committed to socialist dogmas, genuinely imaginative in its plans for social reorganization. Our immediate concern, however, is with attitudes and ideas. If we can clear away some of the moral and political confusion, a new party, if one is born, may amount to something.

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The Brigadier

ISAAC ROSENFELD

WE HAVE BEEN FIGHTING the enemy a very long time. So long that I, who entered the war a foot soldier, have had time to receive more than the usual number of decorations and promotions and to become a brigadier, attached to staff headquarters. I forget how many times I have been wounded and the names of all the battles and campaigns in which I have participated. The greater number of them, however, are not to be forgotten: Striplitz, Bougaumères, Trèle, Bzelokhorets, Kovinitsa, Laud Ingaume, El Khabhar, Woozi-Fassam, and so on. I am the oldest man in our field office, though not in the brigade itself. Lately, the newcomers have not been rising from the ranks, but from the Academy. They are young men who have not proved themselves in any way; some have not even fought.

I am settled into my work, which for many years, I am pleased to say, has been of an absorbing nature. It is difficult to recall the time when I fretted with impatience to return to what I considered my natural life as a citizen. I am happy that I am no longer impatient. I have developed, instead, a great eagerness—an eagerness, however, which is thoroughly disciplined and in every way related to our military enterprise. I do not hesitate to call our enterprise the most glorious and far-reaching that has ever been undertaken.

Far-reaching is not quite the word—though it is only in an unofficial capacity that I admit as much. Let me say that it is not the word for me to use. As a matter, simply, of objective fact, what we are engaged in is, of course, that—I mean far-reaching—and much else besides. But for myself it is not enough, and the work I do must be otherwise defined. I have been studying the ends of our warfare while pursuing them; I have tried to make them a part of myself. I should not want it to be said that the Objective is one thing, and the brigadier's effort in its behalf is quite another, not related to it as the word one and the number one are related. My work is the war itself.

The office in which I do my work was once a schoolhouse; it stands in what used to be enemy country. A section of blackboard,

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cracked down the middle, is still affixed to the wall near my desk and on it you can read a lesson in the enemy's language, written by one of his children; when the chalk began to fade, I had it carefully restored and covered with a coat of shellac. I can read the enemy's hand—which is sometimes difficult even for scholars, as the script is spidery and irregular and varies not only with the dialect but with the very temperament of the writer. The broken lines read: ". . . of the cat and the dog? What will she . . . "; here the first line ends, broken off at the jagged edge of the board. "We," runs the second line, "know that the . . . [several words are obliterated] while the bird was singing. . . ." The third and last line: ". . . is what we all love. It makes us very happy." I like to imagine, although I know this is nothing but a child's exercise, that these broken lines, could I only complete them, would tell me more about the enemy than all the work of our specialists combined. As for my subordinates, I have led them to believe that these scraps of writing have something to do with logistics—which is all they care about.

The benches, the charts, the books and other blackboards of the schoolhouse have long since been removed. The rooms are now occupied by sturdy desks of our own design, developed during the war, and the walls are lined with filing cabinets and hung with maps of the region. The sides of the house have been reinforced against blast with sandbags, and the windows have been covered with intersecting strips of wire and tape which, when the sun is right, cast patterns of shadow upon our papers. If there were nothing else to do, it would be a pleasure to trace some of these patterns. The glass—these are the enemy's original panes—is very bright and clear. The enemy is known for the quality of his glass works. A strange people.

Our office is a relay station among the various fronts. The position of the fronts has grown so complicated through the years, that I never attempt to give our location with reference to the lines of battle. We are well in the center of one circle of fighting, on the periphery of a second, and connected by a long tangent with a third. From time to time our position appears enveloped, and we pack our papers, dismantle our immobile equipment, and prepare to retreat. Subsequent intelligence, however, informs us that the first reports, owing to the complexity of the warfare, were erroneous in many respects and that, far from being encircled, our position may be described as part of an arc thrown round the enemy's flank. The lines of battle, the longer I study them, seem to me more and more like the arms of many embracing bodies.

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It is our general purpose, but not my specific task, to supply logistical information to headquarters in the front and in the rear. We are one of a number of stations that co-ordinate the numerous reports both of the enemy's movements and of our own, and relay these back and forth. These reports never fail to conflict with one another, and no matter how well trained our spies, pilots, observers, and scouts may be, we must keep a large staff working round the clock to prevent mistakes, repetitions, and inconsistencies from appearing in our dispatches. Even so we have blundered many times, and our only consolation, and at the same time the reason that reprimands from headquarters have not been more severe, is the fact that the enemy must work under the same disadvantages. Very often a report so complicated and contradictory that it seems impossible to submit, is nevertheless a true picture of the fighting. You can see what we are up against. And then there are the many spontaneous breakdowns of routine for which no one is to blame, the impatience of my superiors which is always interfering with the work, the orders handed down from above, countermanding orders that have already been carried out, and so many other difficulties that are part of the day's normal detail. To make matters worse a training class for scouts is held in the basement of our schoolhouse and we often hear them laughing or crying out in pain as they tumble about on the mats. I have been trying to get this class removed, thus far without success.

My own work developed as a subsidiary of the main logistical operation. My superiors are not yet convinced of the importance of my task (I have been at it for eleven years!), but some of them are interested, and all my equals and subordinates support me in it, so I am not required to give up my investigations. I work in a semiofficial capacity, filling in and sending out my own reports and as much corroborative material as I can lay my hands on—all this in addition to my regular duties. I am kept very busy indeed, seldom working less than sixteen hours at a stretch. I sometimes think, sitting as I do in an old schoolhouse, that I am both schoolmaster and pupil: a teacher to those who are beneath me in rank and an idiot child to my superiors.

I work on the enemy proper. I am trying to discover what he is, what motivates him, what his nature is. And if you say, as so many of my superiors do, that this is known, I reply that I am attacking his very essence. This is not known. In spite of the many long years that we have been at war with him, and the periods of time, in the past, when we lived at his side in restless peace, we know

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nothing of him that is really worth knowing and that must be known. I myself am convinced that victory will be impossible until we gain this knowledge—and it is precisely to this knowledge that I am devoting my life.

What do we know? The enemy is darker than we, and shorter in stature. His language, as I have indicated, has nothing in common with our own; his religion is an obscenity to all of us who have not made a specialty of studying it. Well then, as I say, he is shorter and darker, two positive facts. His language, though it would be too much trouble to go into it here, is of such and such a kind—a third fact—and his religion is this, that and the other thing, which gives us still another fact. So much we know. Still, what is he?

I have gone many times to the camps and hospitals in the rear to interview the prisoners we have taken. It teaches me nothing, but I nevertheless make my regular visits, and just the other week I returned from one of our hospitals. There was the usual sight in the wards; I am hardened to it. (And yet, almost as if to test myself, I try to recall what I have seen. Am I absolutely hardened?) There were the lightly wounded, their personalities not distorted by pain, and the natural qualities of these men could be observed: their churlishness, stupidity, sullenness, or good nature. They are much like our own soldiers, especially in their boredom. I spoke with them, I took my usual sampling—so many boys (as with our own troops, eleven-year-olds are not uncommon), so many youths, so many of the middle-aged, so many old men, old campaigners. The usual questions, the usual answers—home, parents, occupation, the government, women, disease, God, the purpose of the war, of life, of history, etc. There is nothing to be learned here that we don't already know. Then the wards of the severely wounded—the amputations, the blinded, the infected. The stench is the same as our own stench (the hospital orderlies deny this, maintaining that the enemy's is worse!). The ones with fever have fever, though their skins and eyes show it differently from ours. The delirious rave, the chilled shiver, the poisoned vomit and groan. There are outcries, the usual hysteria, weeping, coughing, and hemorrhage. One lies in a coma; the stump of his leg is gangrenous, it is too late, he cannot be saved. Another soldier has nearly every bone in his body broken: he has both his thighs in traction, a broken back, a broken arm, his skull wound in bandages. Can he be said to suffer either more or less than one of our own men in similar circumstances, or in any way differently from him? I attend

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an operation—it is the same thing over and over again. The mental casualties in their guarded ward are no different from ours. Some in straightjackets, strapped to their beds, some screaming, some colorless, lifeless, forever immobile. Here and there a dead body, not yet removed. I lift the sheet; the face is already puffed up. The shock of it is gone, and I can no longer remember what it actually used to be like. I poke a finger into a puffy cheek, leaving a depression which takes a long time to fill up again. It is the same death as our own.

I go to the hospitals, though I learn nothing there, and I go to the prison camps, also in vain. Once I had myself incarcerated, disguised as an enemy soldier. I slept with the men in their barracks, ate with them, studied them, was soon infested with the same lice. I was involved in a plan to escape, of which I informed our guards. No one saw through my disguise, and I, in turn, failed to see through the undisguised men and learned nothing. In fact, the few weeks I spent in prison camp were extremely discouraging, for if the gap between the enemy and ourselves is so small that I can pose, undetected, as one of his men, why is it that I can't cross over to him?

I have even suspected my project of a subtle treason. By "cross over to him," I mean of course, "cross the gulf that separates us from knowledge of his true nature." Now I know where I stand in this regard and it no longer troubles me; but at one time I feared that the second expression really meant nothing more than the first and I thought surely that my whole ambition was only to desert to the enemy. Perhaps he fascinated me in the precise sense of attraction, drawing me, through my desire to know, closer and closer to his side. My conscience drove me to my superior, Major General Box. He believes in my project and follows my reports with interest. The General reassured me; it is his opinion that we are all drawn to the enemy, particularly in such a long war, and that the enemy is drawn to us. In certain respects we even begin to resemble each other. But this is only natural, and has nothing to do with my project, which, far from being treason, remains the most important of the war.

I was reassured, but was soon taken with a fresh disquietude. A suggestion that the general had made, without meaning to do so, set me on a new course of activity. The general had said that in certain respects we come to resemble the enemy. What are these respects? Perhaps the knowledge that I was seeking really lay in myself? The resemblance to the enemy might have grown so strong in my case, that it was my own nature I would have to know in order

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to know his. I took a leave from the service, the only one I have had in the entire campaign, and spent a month in one of the enemy's mountain villages that had been captured by our troops. I lived away from the men, attended only by goats which forage high up among the rocks in this region. I had a hut to myself, and all the mountains necessary to a great introspection. But I learned nothing, nothing that I did not already know.

It was when I returned to active service that I began the most desperate work that I have as yet undertaken. I selected a group of twenty prisoners, all young, sturdy, healthy men. I lived with them until I grew to know them well; some were like my own sons, and one in particular, a peasant boy named Reri, I will say that I loved. I spent long hours out of doors with my companions, joined them in races and various sports, their own as well as ours. We went on long camping and fishing trips about the country, and I developed so great a trust in them that I even provided them with firearms and let them hunt with me. Evenings, when we were not camping under the open sky, we entertained ourselves in my lodge, drinking, playing cards or chess, listening to music, or holding the most intimate conversations—conversations and confidences that verged on love. We became very intimate; there has never been a group of men whom I have known or loved so well, never a youth as my Reri for whom I have had such a close and tender feeling. It was above all with Reri that I carried on my desperate yet gentle work; I strove to know him as completely as one man can ever hope to know another, and something in his response to me, perhaps an intuitive comprehension of my motive, promised that my effort would be rewarded. He was a handsome boy, taller than the average among the enemy, and fairer in color and complexion. Certainly one such as he could be known, a face as open as his could not long conceal the secrets of the inner nature. Often when I was not with him I would picture his face to myself, trusting that a chance moment of insight might reveal him, and therefore his whole people, to me. And I studied his image, sketching him and taking many photographs while he sat patiently before me. (I have kept these sketches and photographs, and look at them from time to time as I once looked at the living Reri. His image still saddens and perplexes me.) So, with all my companions, I engaged in an unceasing search after friendship and understanding, hoping that love would teach me what I was determined to know.

But my ultimate means were not to be gentle, and when I

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failed again I had to resort, with great reluctance, in shame and disgust, to the final means I had selected to attain my objective. As I had been their friend and lover and father, their teacher in the ways of our people and their pupil in the ways of theirs, so, at last, I became their torturer, hoping now to break them down and force them to yield what they had not been able to give freely. One day I ordered them whipped, the next, beaten; all of them, including Reri. I stood by, directing their tortures and noting their surprise, their hatred of me, their screams and their pleas for mercy. I could not help feeling that I had betrayed them; but my guilt only excited me the more and made me inflict always greater agony and humiliation upon them. It must have been guilt that was responsible for my extreme excitement, in the grip of which, while supervising the tortures, I would feel an overwhelming hatred of the enemy, and become convinced that my hatred had brought me so much farther than love, to the very brink of knowledge. When my companions died, I trained, in much the same manner, a new group, in which I included some of the enemy's women. The experiment was repeated. This time I did not spare myself, but submitted in their company to some of the same tortures, as if there might still be lurking in me an essential particle of their enemy's nature which was itself either capable of yielding the truth, or of preventing me from finding it. The experiment failed again. Again I learned nothing, nothing at all.

I still go to the wards and the camps, and from time to time I still conduct tortures. I have devised many other means of coping with my problem, some of them not yet tested. Over the years, I have grown hardened to failure. I more or less expect it now as an essential element of my work. But though I am hardened and toughened and experienced, I find that my work grows more and more difficult. Because of my interest in prisoners, new duties have been assigned to me. Recently negotiations for the exchange of prisoners broke down between the enemy and ourselves, and their number keeps piling up, as ours does in their camps; it is now my duty to arrange for their transportation to the interior. And then there are still the many administrative details of my department, to which I must somehow find time to attend; there are still the hazards and ever greater complications of our old war, which we have not yet won, and which, I have become absolutely certain, we will never win unless I succeed in my task. To know the enemy! It is the whole purpose and nature of our war, its ultimate meaning, its glory and

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its greatness. Already I have succeeded in my own character, for I have become my task in my whole being. Nothing comes between me and the work I do. I have triumphed in my character and in my person, but I must still triumph over the enemy. Sometimes I see his armies standing before me, clearly revealed in their dark, powerful mass, and I rush out of the schoolhouse, out of our office, and I feel that in a moment, but one moment more, I will know the truth. And when I hear our gunfire from the front that winds arounds us in all directions, I know that if my faith is only great enough, the knowledge will come to me and I will win.

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London Letter

DEAR EDITORS,

If governments were to be remembered by epithets like the Hundred Days, or the Terror, this first government of the socialist era in Britain would pass into history as the Reign of Virtuous Gloom. Both, the virtue and the gloom, become strikingly evident if one compares our life here with conditions in France (from where I have just returned after a longish visit). The contrast is truly fantastic.

France has emerged from five years of occupation in a state of almost complete economic sanity and moral insanity. She produces most of the food she needs, but the normal channels of circulation and distribution have broken down. This breakdown is due not to economic, but to political and moral causes. In other words, it is a functional, not a structural disease. There is plenty of wheat but little bread, because the farmers feed wheat to the cattle, distrusting the franc; there is plenty of milk, but not a drop in Paris, for similar reasons; there was little real inflation, but prices soared because goods were speculatively hoarded. During my six weeks' stay there were six *scandales* or exposures of large-scale rackets in bread, wine, potatoes, pulses, petrol, and clothing coupons—each *scandale* implicating one of the political parties in the then tripartite government and being launched by one of the rival parties at the appropriate moment, as a routine move on the political chessboard. There is no longer a black market as it has practically swallowed the legal white one; the result is a general gray of various shades, expressing the degrees of illegality of the transactions which the ordinary Frenchman is compelled to do in order to obtain bread, fats, meat, apartments, clothes, cigarettes; and to obtain the money for obtaining them. The same routine illegality is forced upon shopkeepers, department stores, business firms if they want to survive. Even the political parties were cashing in on the black market according to the production branch they controlled through their ministries; the most notorious and brazen one was the open sale of licenses for the acquisition of private cars by the then Minister for Industrial Production, Marcel Paul, against cheques handed to the C.P. fund. Rationing had broken down so completely that nobody whom I asked even knew what the official rations were on which he was supposed to live. This inevitably led to the retort whether I knew what *our* rations were and

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whether *we* lived on them; and affirmative answers met with frank incredulity or a polite smile, implying that I was trying to sell British propaganda. But there was also a curious resentment, betraying some half-conscious national guilt complex, compensated for by deprecation of the priggish virtues and lack of *debrouillardise* of the British. But, of course, not all Frenchmen have the knack of *debrouillardise*—so much the worse for these. As some public figure said: two thirds of France live in the jungle, the remaining third in the desert.

I repeat—and the fact is publicly admitted by the more sincere French politicians—that all this is due not to economic, but to political and moral causes. Medicine had to recognize that there are functional disorders without demonstrable structural defects, and social science will probably arrive at similar conclusions. Meanwhile I submit the matter for discussion in your symposium on the future of socialism.

To return to this island of Virtue and Gloom: if you reverse the present condition of France, then you get roughly the idea of the present condition of England. From the economic point of view, England emerged from the war practically bankrupt; but at the first postwar elections it recorded the sanest vote of its history; and public morale, in accepting continued rationing and austerity, proved almost depressingly sound and firm. (I say depressingly, because this patient acceptance is not so much based on farsightedness and voluntary sacrifice, as on resignation, puritan tradition, and lack of *joie de vivre*. The people in the suburbs and working-class districts accept the bad life because they have never tasted the good life; there is probably more rejoicing in heaven about one repentant French black marketeer than about ten British Ministry of Food Inspectors.) Still, one can't have it both ways, and the English chose the hard and sound one. In France, the contrast between rich and poor has become sharply accentuated since the war; here nobody starves and nobody gets a decent steak. This is meant literally: even in London's top luxury restaurants food is much poorer, both in quality and quantity, than in the average French bistro. The black market here is insignificant, and though scarce goods are kept under the counter for old customers, they are sold at regulation price and it is quite impossible for instance to buy a packet of cigarettes by offering more—while in France any amount can be had by paying four times the official price.

In short, the socialist era in Britain started by a general leveling down of the living standard—precisely as the stupidest critics of socialist theory had predicted. Needless to say that this is not the Government's fault, but the aftermath of war and of decades of capitalist mismanagement (of the coal mines for instance). Needless to say, too, that this is cold comfort in an English winter marked by coal cuts, gas cuts, ration cuts, cigarette shortage, beer shortage, and by the dull, monoto-

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nous more-austerity warnings of the leaders, who seem to have retained nothing from the brilliant flow of Churchillian rhetorics except the sweat-and-toil motif. The irony of the situation is, that while the higher income classes (down to the skilled worker and small shopkeeper) suffer acutely from the leveling-down process, the lower income classes are not conscious of "going up." For their benefits are relative, not absolute: that is to say, rationing does not give them more food, but merely prevents their getting even less; government-controlled building rehouses only a fraction of the bombed-out per year and merely prevents all building material from going to the rich; and so on. The objective impoverishment of the country makes it inevitable that the hardships caused by socialist policy are real, the benefits mainly theoretical. The consequence of all this is a growing apathy and resignation. As a symbol of contemporary Britain the lion and unicorn could be replaced by the varicose veins of the British housewife after six years of queueing. But as neither Tories nor Stalinites have any attractive alternative to offer, the keynote of the people's mood is resentment, not revolt; except for a few, so far isolated episodes—squatting, small mutinies against demob-delays overseas, and a series of unauthorized strikes—about which more below.

After eighteen months of Labor rule it is of course too early to draw conclusions. But it is not too early to point out two basic factors among the confusing multitude of threads. One is an objective, one a subjective factor, and both are relevant to socialist theory.

The first consideration is, that apparently socialist movements are doomed always to ascend to power under the worst possible objective conditions. This, on the one hand, provides socialists with the ready excuse that the theory should not be judged by experiments carried out under such handicaps. The Paris Commune was handicapped by war, siege, and famine; the Soviet system was tried out first in the most backward country of Europe, the Weimar Republic carried the economic and psychological burden of Versailles which broke its back. British Labor inherited the hostility of all colored people, the bad international reputation of past imperialist policy, and above all, a country economically on the verge of ruin; thus, once again, the experiment cannot provide conclusive evidence for or against the theory. It would only become conclusive, the theorist argues, if the experiment could be tried in a rich, modern industrial country secure from external aggression—the USA, for instance.

It seems to me that this argument puts the cart before the horse. You cannot expect any ruling class to hand in its resignation, nor the masses to listen to radical propaganda, while all goes well; there must be an "objective revolutionary situation" to get things going—in other

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words, a catastrophe. Hence it is in the nature of things that socialist movements will always inherit a more or less bankrupt estate, that they will always ascend to power in the "wrong" country or at the "wrong" moment. As this factor is implicit in socialist theory it cannot at the same time be treated as an extraneous accident and serve as an excuse. Socialism is meant to be a cure for diseased society, and no doctor can get away with the excuse that people only call him when they are ill.

This brings us to the second factor: every leadership has a certain elbow-room of subjective freedom within the hard limits set by objective conditions. Nobody can blame the Government for being unable to provide more houses, food, coal, dollars for imports, and so on. You can't expect socialism to do miracles—but you can and must expect it to give the people a message and an inspiration, to bring home to them the consciousness of the opening of a new era. This is where the Labor Government has failed. Take as an example the momentous event of Britain's coal mines passing from private to national ownership after half a century of socialist agitation, on January 1, 1947. Coal is the hard core of Britain's industrial life, and the coal miner the pioneer and symbol of the struggles of the Working-Class Movement. What a pageant Hitler or Mussolini would have staged to impress upon the people's memory this historic event! What a glorious ballyhoo if it had happened in America! Well, I have seen the great event on the newsreels. It took place in the Ministry of Fuel's austere conference room and was about as inspiring as the annual visit of the welfare committee in a state orphanage. Shinwell's speech and Lord Hyndley's reply were in the grayest virtue-and-gloom key; and the only moment when proceedings rose to the pathos of the historic occasion was when Attlee referred to the future of the National Coal Board by the inspired metaphor: "It is going to bat on a sticky wicket, but I think it will score a great many sixes." You can imagine how inspired the miners must have felt by this flash of Dantonesque oratory.

It is nonsense to pretend that people in this country don't like noisy celebrations and public displays; each Derby-Day and Cup Final is proof to the contrary. It is equally stupid to keep repeating that "this is no time for celebrations." No people can live on bread-rationing alone. And I am not arguing here in favor of circus games; I only want to say that socialism minus emotional appeal, structural changes in economy without functional changes in mass-consciousness, must always lead to a dead end of one sort or another. The present Labor leaders don't seem to have even an inkling of this home truth. While the Government passes its nationalization bills, raises the school-leaving age, institutes its Public Health Service, votes old-age pensions and family allowances, pursues its legislative program slowly, steadily, and on the whole with considerable success, it is doing nothing to change the atmo-

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sphere, the mental climate of the country. If a new Rip Van Winkle had gone to sleep under the Churchill government two years ago and woke up now, he could go on living for weeks and traveling all over England without discovering that anything has changed in people's lives. I happen to live on a sheep farm in North Wales, next to a slate-mining village called Blaenau Ffestiniog. As neither slate mining nor sheep farming are on the nationalization program, the "landslide," the "new era" has changed literally and absolutely nothing in the life of the village, in the thoughts and habits and emotions of the people. The advent of the age of socialism has affected their daily routine about as much as a change of government in Mexico. And the same goes for millions of the politically indifferent all over the country.

"But what else did you expect?" the staunch Labor politician will answer; "you know that we are a reformist, gradualist movement; you can't expect Clem Attlee to dance the Carmagnole in Trafalgar Square, nor Lord Rothschild, Labor peer, to swing aristocrats on lamp-posts. You are a romantic, my dear fellow, and your idea of socialism is half a century behind the times. Business as usual was our motto during the Blitz, and business as usual is the motto of our Socialist Revolution. For a revolution it is, though a slow and bloodless one; and even our ultraradical Harold Laski brought a libel suit against a newspaper for alleging that in preaching revolution, he meant anything rash or violent."

This is the typical kind of answer of the typical Labor politician, based on the typical mistake of equating gradualism with dullness. With one half of the argument I fully agree: to wit, that the reformist way is the only possible one for this country; that a revolution on orthodox Leninist lines, apart from being unthinkable under present conditions, would lead to a catastrophe; and that, if all goes well, and Labor remains in power, we shall see within a generation or so a quiet but profound transformation of the whole social and economic structure of the country. But this has nothing to do with the second half of the argument; and Labor will only remain in power if it succeeds in capturing the people's imagination. They voted Labor because they were fed up with the Tories; after five years of Virtue and Gloom, they may turn Stalinite or back to the Tories, for the same negative reasons. Gradualism and long-term planning are no justification for the fact that the *Daily Herald* is the drabbest and dullest paper in this country. If it can't change its traditions, why can't the victorious Labor Party find the means to start a new, truly popular paper and get the politically indifferent masses away from the influence of the Rothermeres and Beaverbrooks and Kemsleys? The best journalists in this country are Left; but they have to work for the *Mail* and *Express* because there is no scope for them on a socialist paper in socialist Britain. Why can't socialist

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Britain produce films on the lives of Marx or Robert Owen or Keir Hardy or the Tolpuddle Martyrs—which would be just as exciting as films on Henry VIII or Lady Hamilton? Why has the British working-class family to spend its holidays at home or on a miserable excursion which consists mainly of queueing—for the train, for a room, for tea, lunch, cigarettes, cinemas—while Butlin's private holiday-camps for the lower middle classes are a roaring success, with sport, dances, entertainments and no end of fun for very little money? Why can't the Government hire Mr. Butlin—or study the Nazis' "Strength through Joy" organization, which was in many respects a truly admirable thing? Why is the only place in any English village or town where a soldier can play billiards, read magazines, hear lectures and get cheap meals, the YMCA—and why are Labor clubs the most cheerless places anywhere? Why is no serious attempt being made to show the people in this country what socialism is really about? We hear the news at nine o'clock; but where, to quote Eliot, where are the eagles and the trumpets?

The answer to these questions is, firstly, that each national branch of the Working-Class Movement is bound to adapt itself to certain national characteristics. The ruthlessness of the Bolsheviks reflected the mentality of a semi-Asiatic country; the arduous theorists of the SPD were steeped in German pedantry; the great tribunes of French socialism drew on the sources of latin eloquence; and the Labor Movement has inherited the Briton's proverbial main virtue and vice, his Lack of Imagination. (More or less consciously, lack of imagination has always been associated in this country with straightness, honesty, and tradition; its opposites, "smartness" and "cleverness," with dubious and mainly foreign practices.)

And secondly, each political organism develops, as it advances in age, a kind of automatic filter system through the meshes of which only those are able to ascend to leadership who, in mentality and temperament, conform more or less to the required standard type; it is the equivalent of Natural Selection in the political field. Hence the prevalence in the British Labor Movement of the Transport House bureaucrat, and its contempt for "intellectuals" like Laski and Strachey, for brilliant *enfants terribles* like Nye Bevan, for people who are considered too clever by half like Crossman or too passionately sincere like Michael Foot. I could continue the list; if the outsiders were insiders, Britain could have the most dynamic government in its history. As things are, Bevan and Strachey were given the most thankless and unpopular ministries (housing and food); while, according to the law of natural selection, the most colorless leader in socialist history became the first Prime Minister of the new era.

Another paradoxical aspect of the situation is, that the forerunners

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of the political Labor movement, the trade unions, have today become the heaviest drag on the Labor Government. While I am writing this, the London transport workers are out on an unauthorized strike and the Government has had to resort to the ominous measure of calling in the Army to maintain London's food supply. Although the troops are being used to get the goods to the people and not to break the strike, the workers are of course unimpressed by such subtle distinctions; so bitterness is mounting and the Government's stock is falling. Now even Conservative papers admit that the men's demands are reasonable enough—the main point being the reduction of the lorry-drivers' working week from 48 to 44 hours. The Transport and General Workers' Union, to which the men belong, naturally backs their claims. It is the most powerful union in the country. If it cannot reach agreement with the employers through the national joint negotiating machinery, it can ask for a committee of inquiry, appeal to Parliament, and so on.

But the union leaders in charge have let the negotiations drag on for nine months—on points of contest which could have been settled in nine days. They "do not seem to have worried over the time wasted. They were unaware of the fact that the patience of the men was at an end. The leaders of this mammoth union were clearly out of touch with the men they were supposed to represent. They seemed to know next to nothing of the mood of their members. So great is the gulf that has developed between the central executive and the rank and file, that both have come to obey different impulses. . . . "

The above comment is not from some Trotskyite paper, but from *Tribune,* the Labor weekly, one of whose editors is Jenny Lee, wife to Cabinet Minister Nye Bevan. I quote it to show you how generally it is realized among clear-sighted Labor politicians that the trade unions have become the most awkward problem of the socialist future. For it is almost mathematically predictable that as nationalization and planning progress, and as the unions become more and more absorbed into semigovernmental, managerial functions, the estrangement between their bureaucracy and the working masses will become even greater. "The time has passed when the only function of the unions was to represent the interests of the men against the employers." This sounds like a pronouncement out of *Pravda,* but I am still quoting the English *Tribune.* The article ends with the pious hope that the union leaders will regain the confidence of the rank and file. But it is an illogical hope. When the State becomes the biggest employer and the unions part of the State bureaucracy, they cease to be an instrument of the working class and become an instrument of the coercion of the working class. That is what has happened in Russia, where the worker is once more as helpless as he was in pre-Tolpuddle days. Who is going to protect the workers in the Workers' State?—The question is less paradoxical than

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it sounds, and I have found no answer to it in Labor's blueprints of the future. So that's another one for your symposium.

I have no space left to talk about foreign policy; that will have to wait until the next Letter. As for outstanding literary events, they don't have to wait—there haven't been any. Congratulations to the British edition of PR; though it is rather humiliating for the Left intelligentsia over here that nothing similar can be locally produced, and that one has to import the candles from your capitalist hell to our socialist limbo.

ARTHUR KOESTLER

P.S. I have just read a story in the *Daily Mail* which may serve as an illustration to the first part of my letter. Hans Frantz, a German prisoner of war, escaped a few days ago from a PoW camp in Normandy, stowed away on a cross-channel boat, landed safely in England, spent one day ashore, and in the evening surrendered to the skipper of the boat in which he had come. Back in Boulogne, he told a police inspector: "I had no idea there was so little real comfort in England compared with France."

Quod erat demonstrandum.

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Poetry

THE TRUE, THE GOOD, AND THE BEAUTIFUL*

HE HEARD THE NEWSBOYS SHOUTING "EUROPE! EUROPE!"

Dear Citizens,
I heard the newsboys shouting "Europe! Europe!"
It was late afternoon, a winter's day
Long as a prairie, wool and ashen gray,
And then I heard the silence, drop by drop,
And knew I must again confront myself:
"What shall I cry from my window?" I asked myself,
"What shall I say to the citizens below?
Since I have been a *privileged character*
These four years past. Since I have been excused
From the war for the lesser evil, merciless
As the years to girls who once were beautiful.
What have I done which is a little good?
What apples have I grasped, for all my years?
What starlight have I glimpsed for all my guilt?"

Then to the dead silence I said, in hope:
"I am a student of the morning light,
And of the evil native to the heart.
I am a pupil of emotion's wrongs
Performed upon the glory of this world.
Myself I dedicated long ago
—Or prostituted, shall I say?—to poetry,
The true, the good, and the beautiful,
Infinite fountains inexhaustible,
Full as the sea, old as the rocks,
new as the breaking surf—"

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* This is a passage from a longer poem.

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THE SILENCE ANSWERED HIM ACCUSINGLY

"Don't fool yourself," the silence said to me,
"Don't tell yourself a noble lie once more!"

Then to the silence, being accused, I said:
"I teach the boys and the girls in my ageing youth,
I try to tell them the little I know of truth,
Saying, In the beginning is the word,
And in the end and everywhere in love,
In all love's places and in the mind of God.
Three words I speak, though they are bare and far,
untouchable as a star,
The true, the good, and the beautiful,
Shifting my tones as if I said to them
Candy, soda, fruits and flowers,
And if they hear what thunderclap uproars,
unanimous applause,
(Extremely gratifying signs of pleasure).

'Behold the unspeakable beauty,' I say to them,
'Arise and lift your eyes and raise your hearts
In celebration and in praise because
Plato's starlight glitters amid the shocking wars.' "

SUCH ANSWERS ARE COLD COMFORT TO THE DEAD

"What empty rhetoric," the silence said,
"You teach the boys and girls that you may gain
The bread and wine which sensuality
Sues like a premier or a president.
These are illusions of your sense of guilt
Which shames you like a vain lie when revealed.
The other boys slumped like sacks on desperate shores."

"But well you know the life which I have lived,
Cut off, in truth, by all that I have been
From the normal pleasures of the citizen.
How often in the midnight street I passed
The party where the tin horns blew contempt
And the rich laughter rose as midnight struck,

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The party where the New Year popped and foamed
Opening like champagne or love's wet crush,
The while I studied long the art which in
America gains silence like a wall
—I am a student of the lies of light,
I am a poet of the sleepless night
In new and yet unknown America,
—I am a reader in love's long defeat.
I gave the boys and girls my mind and art:
May I not cite this as a little good?"

THE SILENCE IN EMPTINESS ACCUSED HIM THUS "A PRIVILEGED CHARACTER"

Am I indeed guilty in privilege?
And am I stained in the commonweal's guilt?
What did I do? and how did I assent?
What good and gold will I gain, which they defend?
When did I lie and say this age is good?
I am a twice-torn critic from way back!

America! Tarawa! in the Pacific seas—
I went to Tarawa with the seaborne boys
At the silver screen: how far I was,
Seated in the soft dark, nervous or sick,
(O to be in 4F, now that war is here,
Sang the ground-glass cynics with a jocose jeer).
I saw the marked Marines gaze at the Petty girl
(Nude as a peeled banana, comely as pears),
(Lust never again will rise in some of them),
I saw them pray at sunset in the strength
Young manhood shows in sunburnt summer's health:
(Many of them were dead in the next dusk)
What can I say to down my privilege?
What but the roulette reason, like gold hair?
The grace, the luck, the accidents which tear
The heart and head, formless as fallen rags.
The spinning ball which stops at here, not there,
Made you serene as steeplejacks on high,
Full of the joy of life and the juice and the sleep,

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Left me a twice-told critic, whipped by fear,
Shocked by the memory of every year.

—This is no answer to the hopeless dead,
I cannot justify myself or judge
My privilege, my lush largesse, my life.
Description is my only strength and grace,
Merely to love the truth and as I gaze
(Student and paid admission who
Wades forth to Tarawa at the silver screen)
Let John who was as much estranged as I
Now in the last estrangement judge the truth!

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

THE RAPE OF EUROPA

This age it is the same, with less remembered.
The first was mounted by a foam-white bull;
others that came after were less sure
what beast bore God upon them fatally.
Always Europa is a doubting mother,
seeing the torn place struggle to be healed;
while what is born lies shameless in her lap.

This age her whole loveliness lies mauled,
battered and barren from a six years' bout,
so trod and torn, grossness itself defiled.
Though none could seem to mother her but earth
man monstered God upon her nonetheless.
The muck she lies in mocks the muck of birth,
and what is born lies blameless in her lap.

Horror got of horror may yet be blest
when the great scar of birth begins to scab
and with each change of weather pull and burn,
and the wound verge on flow. What bore, tore;
the horror and the glory are the same.
Man's hope the wound, God's memory the scar!

—else what is born lies nameless in her lap.

R. P. BLACKMUR

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THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER

Each fox his burrow
Each ordinary man
His cubicle or crèche;
But I, so made, so saved,
Patched, buttressed by the sleight of hand of science
Can't help see with the fresh

X-ray eyes of pain an eroded future,
Where I shall be put out to grass,
Solus. The door latched
To the world,
No more anonymous as a vest—
But as a meteor, March-ides-fateful; watched

By covert eyes
I tear, tear
At the adhesive flesh of time;
Only the bony past, skeleton bare,
Is kind. Is each man's sacrifice mighty against evil
Or only that which dooms its citadel?

BARBARA HOWES

DON'T LOOK NOW BUT MARY IS EVERYBODY

Mary, long by Boss's kisses bored,
Quit desk and stole His yacht and jumped aboard.
Her lamb took she, for gentler were his kisses.
Compass and pistol took she in her purse.
Away sailed she to eat new freedom up.
And her helped ocean and grew calm and snored.
But sent His typhoons Boss; therein no bliss is.
Then knew she—by four signs—whose jig was up:

Her buoyed the life-preserver down, not up;
True was the pistol's aim, but in reverse;
The compass pointed only toward abysses;
The little lamb nipped Mary's thighs and roared.

PETER VIERECK

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Dialogue on Anxiety

WILLIAM BARRETT

Characters:

Heidegger
Freud

(NOTE: *I do not claim to speak with the accents of these famous men, nor even necessarily to represent their doctrines faithfully in every detail; I only want to put forward two different currents of ideas that flow more or less centrally about these names, without perhaps "giving the right" to either. The dialogue is a form for airing different sides of a complex subject,* sans en conclure. *This is the art of being systematically inconclusive—a very profitable one intellectually, discovered by Plato in his early dialogues, but which nowadays we ought to practice in more thoroughgoing, less unilinear, fashion than he—that has nothing to do with the business of trying to play the mediator. The mediator who invites two people of different persuasions to his house may end by getting his furniture smashed. Unjust? Well, perhaps it is only his punishment for being too eager to draw a conclusion.*)

H: It is now the Age of Anxiety, I have read somewhere. We two seem to have become its spokesmen. Perhaps it ought to be called the Age of Insomnia. I have constructed, so to speak, the Metaphysics of Insomnia. Are we to be congratulated? We seem to have put something on the map.

F: Excuse me, I put nothing on the map, I only found what had always been there: the burdens, tensions, and repressions. Perhaps the burden is heavier now; only in that sense would I admit to being a spokesman for the *Zeitgeist*. Religion, for one thing, is no longer a universal recourse. In my writing on the subject of religion I think I did not do justice to its remarkable aspect of sublimation. There is no doubt that in the past religion provided many individuals with an extraordinary power to sublimate.

H: The burdens are in every way heavier. Hegel drew the

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map of the divided consciousness. Then God died in Nietzsche. Now we live with the divided consciousness in a universe where God is dead. That is what I have tried to describe in my writings.

F: But if all that is true—if this is really the Age of Anxiety, as you say—then I have a very serious objection to make against you and the Kierkegaardians.

H: What?

F: You make a great deal of Kierkegaard's statement, "With everyone engaged everywhere in making things easier, someone was needed to make them difficult again." The statement is eloquent, but how exactly does it apply to our situation nowadays? He was talking there against the Hegelians and the Hegelian system. They had explanations of everything, he says; and in that sense they made everything seem easy, they were the cosmic optimists. Personally, I am not at all displeased that he should have made difficulties for that philosophic system. My own philosophic bent has always been one of healthy contempt for philosophy. (Excuse me for saying that, but I have been feeling for some minutes past that I must make this clear as soon as possible. I felt very many misgivings at allowing myself to be dragged into this discussion, for I have never cared very much to haggle with philosophers.) Well now, the Hegelian system is hardly a thing we have to combat very seriously today. Yet Kierkegaard's followers still take their master's statement quite literally. They claim for themselves the task of making things difficult. They wish to increase human tensions. I should say, on the contrary, that precisely what is needed nowadays is someone to make things easy. Someone must lighten the load under which mankind labors. That is the task I chose for myself.

H: But are we not really talking here about different things?

F: That is always possible.

H: Kierkegaard wished, and his followers wish, to make things difficult, in the sense that they wish to snatch man out of banality and restore him to the difficulties of self-consciousness and inwardness. The everyday life of man is one of falsehood. His existence in the world is external and banal. He lives without real consciousness of himself, his life, or his death—above all, of this last. From that fallen state we would rescue him. We would like to see him restore himself to authenticity from the false life of banality—

F: Ah, that word "authenticity" at last. I was waiting to hear it. I would like to have it explained to me, for your use of it somewhat puzzles me.

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H: It is really not a very difficult concept. It is also a very old one. Our German word for it is, I think, the clearest: *Eigentlichkeit,* the quality of being one's own self. Now, in life we frequently have this experience of being put in what we call *unreal* situations—where we are not, we say, at all ourselves. Most men go through life in this condition: "reading the comics and the sporting page"—and going to the movies. They also attend funerals as a social duty, and attempt to behave there as "one should." Bit by bit their *own* life slips away from them, mastered by these external prescriptions of social behavior: *one* does this, *one* does that, *one* does not do something else. Inevitably these social prescriptions permeate consciousness, and men are no longer able to stand face to face with their own life. Imagine, if you will, the point of intersection of all these impersonal prescriptions, and you get the figure of the externalized and public individual whom I have called "the One."

F: One sees what you mean.

H: But this scaffolding that obscures *one's* life is shaken at the approach of death. The best description of this in all literature is given by Tolstoy in his story "The Death of Ivan Ilyich" (which, in fact, I have made basic to my own analysis of death). On his deathbed Ivan Ilyich comes face to face for the first time with the question, What am I, Who am I. Suddenly everything becomes changed. His relations to his wife, children, and the world, become founded now on a new basis: the conscious grasp of his own death. During his life the claims of the world had led him away from himself; now he begins to exist truthfully, to exist as himself. That is what I mean by authenticity.

F: To exist truthfully? But we never grasp our motives fully at any given time: in retrospect, there was always more involved than the fragment that we saw at the time. The mind is an iceberg, seven-eighths under water—and even at the moment of death. I can imagine poor Ivan Ilyich continuing to exist after death, and looking back on those last moments of revelation to find that there too consciousness was fragmentary and incomplete: that is, there were elements in his consciousness whose reasons he did not grasp at the time.

H: That is what we might call the Dialectic of Honesty. Perhaps mankind cannot live "in the truth" after all. But this dialectic of honesty is very difficult, and would take us too far afield; I want to know what you think of my definition of authenticity.

F: Well, I wonder whether a good deal of what you inveigh

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against might not be removed in the ordinary course of education. This heightening of consciousness that you ask for—is it not the expected accompaniment of what we usually call intellectual culture and education?

H: No; it would be a great mistake to imagine that banality is a characteristic only of the man of the masses. We find a banality among the learned, particularly in the academic profession. (Especially, I am told, in America, where the professors are caught in the common aspiration to a suburban, middle-class, comfortable existence.) They live securely in their academic niche, journey to their professional congresses, compete in their genteel way for academic advancement. They feel no fundamental anxiety toward the universe, for they make no passionate demands of it. Enough if it offers them some tiny fragments of rationality, on which they may write their papers, which they read at congresses; and then they sit back to wait for their promotion with a self-confident sense of achievement.

F: What means do you hold out to the individual for attaining authenticity?

H: Just what I have said: the conscious grasp of *his own* death as a possibility of his being at every moment; and h *resoluteness* in the face of this.

F: Excuse me, I do not find those means at all sufficient. We analysts are accustomed to find other and very much more obscure obstacles to a patient's really becoming himself—as you would put it. In fact, as an analyst, I think I have to invert your notion altogether: when the consciousness of death appears all too developed in the patient, it is usually a clue to something else that is hindering his functioning. At the moment, indeed, I am thinking of a particular patient of mine: a man of considerable intelligence and philosophic training, who was given to much subtle and highly conscious philosophizing about death. He faced the prospect of death with considerable Stoicism; in fact, with an eagerness which made me very suspicious quite early in the analysis. Now (to return to your terms), here was resoluteness in the face of death, yet—

H: He was not living authentically? He was not living his own life?

F: Precisely. No one who knew him would have had an idea of the person he was capable of becoming.

H: What did you find out?

F: His trouble was something at once more simple and more obscure. (However, professional ethics does not permit me at this

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point to violate the confidences of private analysis.) When that was cleared up, there was a release of energies such as he had never known. He became himself; or, rather, he became a self that he had been capable of becoming.

H: I would not deny the existence of empirical obstacles (of whatever kind) to the achievement of authenticity. But it was neither my interest nor my province to consider these. I sought to analyze the phenomenological structures of authenticity *as achieved*. So I would ask, in the case of your patient: what was the quality of his life once he began to live authentically? Did not the structure of his consciousness become just that resolute pursuit of the project in the face of death that I have described in detail in my writings?

F: I rather think he thought a good deal less of death. Frankly speaking, I find these structures of consciousness you talk of entirely too formalistic to concern me—unless, of course, I can relate them to function; that is, precisely to that world of everyday behavior from which you would rescue man. It seems to me we function better when we forget about death than when we are conscious of it at every moment. The scientist, when he becomes lost in a problem, may forget that he is mortal and proceed till death cuts short his investigations.

H: Ah, the existence of the scientist is a subject that would take us too far afield. His is a quite specialized existence.

F: Well then, let us enter the more neurotic world of the artist, if you prefer. May I cite the famous passage on the death of Bergotte in Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past?* Proust represents the writer as dedicated to certain artistic obligations which seem to belie the fact that he is mortal. He appears to me to go a little too far, it is true, when he seems willing to accept the writer's perception of these obligations as evidence for immortality. On the other hand, he does say that it is "as if" these obligations came to us from another world. I prefer to hold to this "as if" since it permits me to incorporate the whole passage into my own *Weltanschauung*. The artist, Proust would then be saying, is so possessed by this obligation to his art that in giving himself to the practice of it he has to forget that he is mortal. It is as if he had to abandon entirely the thought that death may cut short his efforts when he gives himself completely to the task of making the work right.

H: But might not I, on the other hand, describe this as just the complete artistic resoluteness in the face of death?

F: One lives authentically (you see, I am trying to accom-

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modate myself to your terms) in proportion as one conquers the problems of one's own existence. Now, this is a question of psychic economy: of removing certain repressions for which we may have to pay too high a price in the amount of energy needed to maintain them, but on the other hand preserving others which play a conserving role in the total economy. In any case, one does not solve the problem by lofty meditations on death and resoluteness.

II

F: But we have not come to grips with the question of anxiety.

H: We were there all the time: when we talked of "making things difficult," when we talked of authenticity.

F: I am more than a little puzzled to know what you think are the sources of anxiety. In your earlier work you speak of anxiety felt toward death. I recognize that as a source of anxiety, I have encountered it in my own investigations. (I fail to see, however, that you have anywhere noticed the opposite fact: the positive longing for death that may appear, consciously or unconsciously, alongside this anxiety.) But by 1933 you have generalized the whole thing, and there I am unable to see just what you intend as the source.

H: Exactly; I *have* generalized. I talk there of states in which we are anxious at nothing in particular. All one can say, if English would permit it, is: "There is anxiety with me."

F: A peculiar neurotic anxiety: with the impersonalization of parental authority, the danger becomes more indefinite, the anxiety becomes more generalized—

H: Wait a minute: isn't it the mark of the real neurotic—the person who is really sick, whose functioning has broken down in one way or another—that his anxiety always tends to take on the most definite shapes? He is afraid of horses, or he is anxious when he walks in the streets or hears the faint ticking of a clock; and so on. Perhaps the more neurotic the individual (more clinically neurotic, that is), the more definite become his delusion and its accompanying anxiety, and the less capable he is of that generalized anxiety that I find to be of the human essence.

F: If you looked further, perhaps you might find that there is a *definite* source of that anxiety too.

H: I have attempted to define it further. Not, however, by its genesis but by its end: that is, the intellectual condition, the intellectual question, which it precipitates.

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F: Which is?

H: In that state of deep *malaise* and boredom when we retreat from each particular thing around us; when nothing can attract or lure us out of ourselves; when even the prospect of being God Himself, understanding all nature and history, seems to be infected with the possibility of this boredom; then, I say, there arises the bottomless intuition: It is possible that nothing at all should exist. And with it the inevitable question: Why does anything at all exist? We confront the contingency of the world nakedly. It is the fundamental intellectual condition of man.

F: Suppose we grant that this is a valid intellectual question. I do not see, however, that human beings will ever be in a position to answer it. But in what relates specifically to anxiety, I have an even more pertinent question: Is it possible that men should feel this overwhelming anxiety at a purely speculative question unless it is a displacement of something else in their lives? A cosmic anxiety, such as you depict, can become gripping only where there is some much more humble and personal cause for being anxious, which is able to load this other anxiety with its charge.

H: We have the case of Pascal, do we not? His is just that cosmic anxiety. And it becomes the source of his total vision of the human condition, thus generating one of the imperishable records of human experience.

F: Pascal's is a case very much in point. Other men have faced his question but continued thereafter to function with greater equanimity. The anxiety that he suffers at "the silence of these infinite spaces" we know to be the result of much more personal sources of anguish. Certainly, the *force* of this anxiety is not generated by the intellectual question itself. This is the neurotic displacement of genius: the neurotic effects, displaced, are able to appropriate large areas of experience—thus resulting in that moving and *personal* vision of the great writer. But we must also remember the price paid for the neurosis: the mutilation as well as the vision that results. Pascal's *Pensées* ought not to make us forget his *Lettres Provinciales,* which are a greater monument of connected prose and composed out of a mockery that is even gay. Had he escaped the shipwreck of his neurosis, the fragments of the *Pensées* might have fused finally into the great work of apologetics he projected: a work that might have been as connectedly eloquent as the *Provinciales.*

H: What a dismal prospect you hold out! Had he conquered his anxiety, he might have completed a great work of apologetics,

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but what would he have become for us then but just a more intellectually acute Bossuet? On the contrary, it is just because the *Pensées* are the fragments of his human shipwreck that they are so imperishable.

F: Even if we grant that his shipwreck is the condition of his vision, can we recommend this course to other human beings? I would extend the point to all the great neurotic geniuses among writers. Suppose a man is sent to prison and there writes a book that could not have been written without that experience. This book is able to move very powerfully the people who are outside at liberty because at certain points their experience, alas, must also resemble his. We will rejoice at this product of incarceration and suffering, but ought we therefore to recommend that the people outside all go to prison? And in the case of the writer himself, we ought certainly to advocate, it seems to me, his pardon or at least his parole. There is, after all, a world outside his bars. The great neurotic writer seems to me to be just such a prisoner.

H: Odd that you should have chosen Pascal's image for the human condition itself: the prisoner in his cell! Was that conscious or unconscious? Might we not say, stretching the word somewhat, that man's relation to the world is essentially *neurotic?* That is: we live in the unstable, on the unstable, and our relation to the world is one of tension and instability. Perhaps that is why the neurotic genius, when he still attains lucidity, seems to us so much more profound. At any rate, this seems to be the developing experience of modern literature. This genius is like a lens that concentrates a ray into burning intensity; but notice that the ray only passes through, but is not generated by the lens.

F: The lens, which concentrates, will also narrow and distort. One thing pays for another.

H: Man, the prisoner, will not be placated. This universe is thrust upon him without an answer to his question, and it is taken away from him at his death. How can he be at peace with this overwhelming affront? His question and his death have planted in his flesh for all his days their twin-barbed prong, rankling.

F: Anxieties will remain—if that is what worries you. Man cannot live in society without repressions. Anxiety at pleasure that has to be foregone will be the signal he gives himself for repression; and these repressions in turn will beget anxiety. If neurotic anxiety disappeared, it is true we might have to lose certain qualities of genius that extreme neuroticism has produced in the past. But there might very well be other compensations.

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H: Suppose the goal achieved and all such anxieties cured. What then? What becomes of man himself? Does he not become just another animal, a little busier, more inquisitive, and more cunning than the rest of the animals?

F: Your question strikes me as very academic, to say the least. Considering the world as it is, the last thing we have to worry about is what will happen when mankind loses its anxieties. This is like asking us to worry about the dreadful prospect of man's becoming torpid and placid when all social conflicts disappear. We are busy enough, as it is, healing the wounds.

H (*mormorando*): Anxious then only about his food, about his litter: his animal competition and his animal survival. I am afraid man would lose his human essence.

F: Those who suffer from real anxieties will know what it means to want to be rid of them.

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Caligari*

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER

THE CZECH Hans Janowitz, one of the two authors of the film *Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari* (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*), was brought up in Prague—that city where reality fuses with dreams, and dreams turn into visions of horror.** One evening in October 1913 this young poet was strolling through a fair at Hamburg, trying to find a girl whose beauty and manner had attracted him. The tents of the fair covered the Reeperbahn, known to any sailor as one of the world's chief pleasure spots. Nearby, on the Holstenwall, Lederer's gigantic Bismarck monument stood sentinel over the ships in the harbor. In search of the girl, Janowitz followed the fragile trail of a laugh which he thought hers into a dim park bordering the Holstenwall. The laugh, which apparently served to lure a young man, vanished somewhere in the shrubbery. When, a short time later, the young man departed, another shadow, hidden until then in the bushes, suddenly emerged and moved along—as if on the scent of that laugh. Passing this uncanny shadow, Janowitz caught a glimpse of him: he looked like an average bourgeois. Darkness reabsorbed the man, and made further pursuit impossible. The following day big headlines in the local press announced: "Horrible sex crime on the Holstenwall! Young Gertrude —— Murdered." An obscure feeling that Gertrude might have been the girl of the fair induced Janowitz to attend the victim's funeral. During the ceremony he suddenly had the sensation of discovering the murderer, who had not yet been captured. The man he suspected seemed to recognize him, too. It was the bourgeois—the shadow in bushes.

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* EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a chapter from a forthcoming book, *From Caligari to Hitler: a Psychological History of the German Film,* to be published this month by the Princeton University Press.

** The following episode, along with other data appearing in my pages on *Caligari,* is drawn from an interesting manuscript Mr. Hans Janowitz has written about the genesis of this film. I feel greatly indebted to him for having put his material at my disposal. I am thus in a position to base my interpretation of *Caligari* on the true inside story, up to now unknown.

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Carl Mayer, co-author with Janowitz of *Caligari,* was born in the Austrian provincial capital of Graz, where his father, a wealthy businessman, would have prospered had he not been obsessed by the idea of becoming a "scientific" gambler. In the prime of life he sold his property, went, armed with an infallible "system," to Monte Carlo, and reappeared a few months later in Graz, broke. Under the stress of this catastrophe, the monomaniac father turned the sixteen-year-old Carl and his three younger brothers out into the street and finally committed suicide. A mere boy, Carl Mayer was responsible for the three children. While he toured through Austria, peddling barometers, singing in choirs, and playing extras in peasant theaters, he became increasingly interested in the stage. There was no branch of theatrical production which he did not explore during those years of nomadic life—years full of experiences that were to be of immense use in his future career as a film poet. At the beginning of the war, the adolescent made his living by sketching Hindenburg portraits on postcards in Munich cafés. Later in the war, Janowitz reports, he had to undergo repeated examinations of his mental condition. Mayer seems to have been very embittered against the high-ranking military psychiatrist in charge of his case.

The war was over. Janowitz, who from its outbreak had been an officer in an infantry regiment, returned as a convinced pacifist, animated by hatred of an authority which had sent millions of men to death. He felt that absolute authority was bad in itself. He settled in Berlin, met Carl Mayer there, and soon found out that this eccentric young man, who had never before written a line, shared his revolutionary moods and views. Why not express them on the screen? Intoxicated with Wegener's films, Janowitz believed that this new medium might lend itself to powerful poetic revelations. As youth will, the two friends embarked on endless discussions that hovered around Janowitz' Holstenwall adventure as well as Mayer's mental duel with the psychiatrist. These stories seemed to evoke and supplement each other. After such discussions the pair would stroll through the night, irresistibly attracted by a dazzling and clamorous fair on Kantstrasse. It was a bright jungle, more hell than paradise, but a paradise to those who had exchanged the horror of war for the terror of want. One evening, Mayer dragged his companion to a sideshow by which he had been impressed. Under the title "Man and Machine" it presented a strong man who achieved miracles of strength in an apparent stupor. He acted as if he were hypnotized. The strangest thing was that he accompanied his feats with utterances which af-

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fected the spellbound spectators as pregnant forebodings.

Any creative process approaches a moment when only one additional experience is needed to integrate all elements into a whole. The mysterious figure of the strong man supplied such an experience. On the night of this show the friends first visualized the original story of *Caligari*. They wrote the manuscript in the following six weeks. Defining the part each took in the work, Janowitz calls himself "the father who planted the seed, and Mayer the mother who conceived and ripened it." At the end, one small problem arose: the authors were at a loss as to what to christen their main character, a psychiatrist shaped after Mayer's archenemy during the war. A rare volume, *Unknown Letters of Stendhal,* offered the solution. While Janowitz was skimming through this find of his, he happened to notice that Stendhal, just come from the battlefield, met at La Scala in Milan an officer named Caligari. The name clicked with both authors.

Their story is located in a fictitious North German town near the Dutch border, significantly called Holstenwall. One day a fair moves into the town, with merry-go-rounds and sideshows—among the latter that of Dr. Caligari, a weird, bespectacled man advertising the somnambulist Cesare. To procure a license, Caligari goes to the town hall, where he is treated haughtily by an arrogant official. The following morning this official is found murdered in his room, which does not prevent the townspeople from enjoying the fair's pleasures. Along with numerous onlookers, Francis and Alan—two students in love with Jane, a medical man's daughter—enter the tent of Dr. Caligari and watch Cesare slowly stepping out of an upright, coffinlike box. Caligari tells the thrilled audience that the somnambulist will answer questions about the future. Alan, in an excited state, asks how long he has to live. Cesare opens his mouth; he seems to be dominated by a terrific, hypnotic power emanating from his master. "Until dawn," he answers. At dawn Francis learns that his friend has been stabbed in exactly the same manner as the official. The student, suspicious of Caligari, persuades Jane's father to assist him in an investigation. With a search warrant the two force their way into the showman's wagon, and demand that he end the trance of his medium. However, at this very moment they are called away to the police station to attend the examination of a criminal who has been caught in the act of killing a woman, and who now frantically denies that he is the pursued serial murderer.

Francis continues spying on Caligari, and, after nightfall, secretly peers through a window of the wagon. But while he imagines

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he sees Cesare lying in his box, Cesare in reality breaks into Jane's bedroom, lifts a dagger to pierce the sleeping girl, gazes at her, puts the dagger away and flees, with the screaming Jane in his arms, over roofs and roads. Chased by her father, he drops the girl, who is then escorted home, whereas the lonely kidnaper dies of exhaustion. As Jane, in flagrant contradiction of what Francis believes to be the truth, insists on having recognized Cesare, Francis approaches Caligari a second time to solve the torturing riddle. The two policemen in his company seize the coffinlike box, and Francis draws out of it—a dummy representing the somnambulist. Profiting by the investigators' carelessness, Caligari himself manages to escape. He seeks shelter in a lunatic asylum. The student follows him, calls on the director of the asylum to inquire about the fugitive, and recoils horror-struck: the director and Caligari are one and the same person.

The following night—the director has fallen asleep—Francis and three members of the medical staff whom he has initiated into the case search the director's office and discover material fully establishing the guilt of this authority in psychiatric matters. Among a pile of books they find an old volume about a showman named Caligari who, in the eighteenth century, traveled through North Italy, hypnotized his medium Cesare into murdering sundry people, and, during Cesare's absence, substituted a wax figure to deceive the police. The main exhibit is the director's clinical records; they prove that he desired to verify the account of Caligari's hypnotic faculties, that his desire grew into an obsession, and that, when a somnambulist was entrusted to his care, he could not resist the temptation of repeating with him those terrible games. He had adopted the identity of Caligari. To make him admit his crimes, Francis confronts the director with the corpse of his tool, the somnambulist. No sooner does the monster realize Cesare is dead than he begins to rave. Trained attendants put him into a strait jacket.

This horror tale in the spirit of E. T. A. Hoffmann was an outspoken revolutionary story. In it, as Janowitz indicates, he and Carl Mayer half-intentionally stigmatized the omnipotence of a state authority manifesting itself in universal conscription and declarations of war. The German war government seemed to the authors the prototype of such voracious authority. Subjects of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, they were in a better position than most citizens of the Reich to penetrate the fatal tendencies inherent in the German system. The character of Caligari embodies these tendencies; he stands for an unlimited authority that idolizes power as such, and,

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to satisfy its lust for domination, ruthlessly violates all human rights and values. Functioning as a mere instrument, Cesare is not so much a guilty murderer as Caligari's innocent victim. This is how the authors themselves understood him. According to the pacifist-minded Janowitz, they had created Cesare with the dim design of portraying the common man who, under the pressure of compulsory military service, is drilled to kill and to be killed. The revolutionary meaning of the story reveals itself unmistakably at the end, with the disclosure of the psychiatrist as Caligari: reason overpowers unreasonable power, insane authority is symbolically abolished. Similar ideas were also being expressed on the contemporary stage, but the authors of *Caligari* transferred them to the screen without including any of those eulogies of the authority-freed "New Man" in which many expressionist plays indulged.

A miracle occurred: Erich Pommer, chief executive of Decla-Bioscop, accepted this unusual, if not subversive, script. Was it a miracle? Since in those early postwar days the conviction prevailed that foreign markets could only be conquered by artistic achievements, the German film industry was of course anxious to experiment in the field of aesthetically qualified entertainment. Art assured export, and export meant salvation. An ardent partisan of this doctrine, Pommer had moreover an incomparable flair for cinematic values and popular demands. Regardless of whether he grasped the significance of the strange story Mayer and Janowitz submitted to him, he certainly sensed its timely atmosphere and interesting scenic potentialities. He was a born promoter who handled screen and business affairs with equal facility, and, above all, excelled in stimulating the creative energies of directors and players.

Pommer assigned Fritz Lang to direct *Caligari,* but in the middle of the preliminary discussions Lang was ordered to finish his serial *The Spiders*; the distributors of this film urged its completion. Lang's successor was Dr. Robert Wiene. Since his father, a once-famous Dresden actor, had undergone a spell of insanity toward the end of his life, Wiene was not entirely unprepared to tackle the case of Dr. Caligari. He suggested, in complete harmony with what Lang had planned, an essential change of the original story—a change against which the two authors violently protested. But no one heeded them.

The original story was an account of real horrors; Wiene's version transforms that account into a chimera concocted and narrated by the mentally deranged Francis. To effect this transformation

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the body of the original story is put into a framing story which introduces Francis as a madman. The film *Caligari* opens with the first of the two episodes composing the frame. Francis is shown sitting on a bench in the park of the lunatic asylum, listening to the confused babble of a fellow sufferer. Moving slowly, like an apparition, a female inmate of the asylum passes by: it is Jane. Francis says to his companion: "What I have experienced with her is still stranger than what you have encountered. I will tell it to you." Fade-out. Then a view of Holstenwall fades in, and the original story unfolds, ending, as has been seen, with the identification of Caligari. After a new fade-out the second and final episode of the framing story begins. Francis, having finished the narration, follows his companion back to the asylum, where he mingles with a crowd of sad figures—among them Cesare, who absent-mindedly caresses a little flower. The director of the asylum, a mild and understanding-looking person, joins the crowd. Lost in the maze of his hallucinations, Francis takes the director for the nightmarish character he himself has created, and accuses this imaginary fiend of being a dangerous madman. He screams, he fights the attendants in a frenzy. The scenery is switched over to a sickroom, with the director putting on horn-rimmed spectacles which immediately change his appearance: it seems to be Caligari who examines the exhausted Francis. After this he removes his spectacles and, all mildness, tells his assistants that Francis believes him to be Caligari. Now that he understands the case of his patient, the director concludes, he will be able to heal him. With this cheerful message the audience is dismissed.

Janowitz and Mayer knew why they raged against the framing story: it perverted, if not reversed, their intrinsic intentions. While the original story exposed the madness inherent in authority, Wiene's *Caligari* glorified authority and convicted its antagonist of madness. A revolutionary film was thus turned into a conformist one—following the much-used pattern of declaring some normal but troublesome individual insane and sending him to a lunatic asylum. This change undoubtedly resulted not so much from Wiene's personal predilections as from his instinctive submission to the necessities of the screen; films, at least commercial films, are forced to answer to mass desires. In its changed form *Caligari* was no longer a product expressing, at best, sentiments characteristic of the intelligentsia, but a film supposed equally to be in harmony with what the less educated felt and liked.

If it holds true that during the postwar years most Germans

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eagerly tended to withdraw from a harsh outer world into the intangible realm of the soul, Wiene's version was certainly more consistent with their attitude than the original story; for, by putting the original into a box, this version faithfully mirrored the general retreat into a shell. In *Caligari* (and several other films of the time) the device of a framing story was not only an aesthetic form, but also had symbolic content. Significantly, Wiene avoided mutilating the original story itself. Even though *Caligari* had become a conformist film, it preserved and emphasized this revolutionary story—as a madman's fantasy. Caligari's defeat now belonged among psychological experiences. In this way Wiene's film does suggest that during their retreat into themselves the Germans were stirred to reconsider their traditional belief in authority. Down to the mass of Social Democratic workers they refrained from revolutionary action; yet at the same time a psychological revolution seems to have prepared itself in the depths of the collective mind. The film reflects this double aspect of German life by coupling a reality in which Caligari's authority triumphs with a hallucination in which the same authority is overthrown. There could be no better configuration of symbols for that uprising against the authoritarian dispositions which apparently occurred under the cover of a behavior rejecting uprising.

Janowitz suggested that the settings for *Caligari* be designed by the painter and illustrator Alfred Kubin, who, a forerunner of the surrealists, made eerie phantoms invade harmless scenery and visions of torture emerge from the subconscious. Wiene took to the idea of painted canvases, but preferred to Kubin three expressionist artists: Hermann Warm, Walter Röhrig, and Walter Reimann. They were affiliated with the Berlin Sturm group, which, through Herwarth Walden's magazine *Sturm,* promoted expressionism in every field of art.

Although expressionist painting and literature had evolved years before the war, they acquired a public only after 1918. In this respect the case of Germany somewhat resembled that of Soviet Russia where, during the short period of war communism, diverse currents of abstract art enjoyed a veritable heyday. To a revolutionized people expressionism seemed to combine the denial of bourgeois traditions with faith in man's power freely to shape society and nature.

"Films must be drawings brought to life": this was Hermann Warm's formula at the time that he and his two fellow designers were

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constructing the *Caligari* world. In accordance with his beliefs, the canvases and draperies of *Caligari* abounded in complexes of jagged, sharp-pointed forms strongly reminiscent of Gothic patterns. Products of a style which by then had become almost a mannerism, these complexes suggested houses, walls, landscapes. Except for a few slips or concessions—some backgrounds opposed the pictorial convention in too direct a manner, while others all but preserved them—the settings amounted to a perfect transformation of material objects into emotional ornaments. With its oblique chimneys on pell-mell roofs, its windows in the form of arrows or kites and its treelike arabesques that were threats rather than trees, Holstenwall resembled those visions of unheard-of cities which the painter Lyonel Feininger evoked through his edgy, crystalline compositions. In addition, the ornamental system in *Caligari* expanded through space, annulling its conventional aspect by means of painted shadows in disharmony with the lighting effects, and zigzag delineations designed to efface all rules of perspective. Space now dwindled to a flat plane, now augmented its dimensions to become what one writer called a "stereoscopic universe."

Lettering was introduced as an essential element of the settings—appropriately enough, considering the close relationship between lettering and drawing. In one scene the mad psychiatrist's desire to imitate Caligari materializes in jittery characters composing the words "I must become Caligari"—words that loom before his eyes on the road, in the clouds, in the treetops. The incorporation of human beings and their movements into the texture of these surroundings was tremendously difficult. Of all the players only the two protagonists seemed actually to be created by a draftsman's imagination. Werner Krauss as Caligari had the appearance of a phantom magician himself weaving the lines and shades through which he paced, and when Conrad Veidt's Cesare prowled along a wall, it was as if the wall had exuded him. The figures of an old dwarf and the crowd's antiquated costumes helped to remove the throng on the fair's tent-street from reality and make it share the bizarre life of abstract forms.

If Decla had chosen to leave the original story of Mayer and Janowitz as it was, these "drawings brought to life" would have told it perfectly. As expressionist abstractions they were animated by the same revolutionary spirit that impelled the two script-writers to accuse authority—the kind of authority revered in Germany—of inhuman excesses. However, Wiene's version disavowed this rev-

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olutionary meaning of expressionist staging or, at least, put it, like the original story itself, in brackets. In the film *Caligari* expressionism seems to be nothing more than the adequate translation of a madman's fantasy into pictorial terms. This was how many contemporary German reviewers understood, and relished, the settings and gestures. One of the critics stated with self-assured ignorance: "The idea of rendering the notions of sick brains . . . through expressionist pictures is not only well conceived but also well realized. Here this style has a right to exist, proves an outcome of solid logic."

In their triumph the philistines overlooked one significant fact: even though *Caligari* stigmatized the oblique chimneys as crazy, it never restored the perpendicular ones as the normal. Expressionist ornaments also overrun the film's concluding episode, in which, from the philistine's viewpoint, perpendiculars should have been expected to characterize the revival of conventional reality. In consequence, the *Caligari* style was as far from depicting madness as it was from transmitting revolutionary messages. What function did it really assume?

During the postwar years expressionism was frequently considered a shaping of primitive sensations and experiences. Gerhart Hauptmann's brother Carl—a distinguished writer and poet with expressionist inclinations—adopted this definition, and then asked how the spontaneous manifestations of a profoundly agitated soul might best be formulated. While modern language, he contended, is too perverted to serve this purpose, the film—or the bioscop, as he termed it—offers a unique opportunity to externalize the fermentation of inner life. Of course, he said, the bioscop must feature only those gestures of things and of human beings which are truly soulful.

Carl Hauptmann's views elucidate the expressionist style of *Caligari*. It had the function of characterizing the phenomena on the screen as phenomena of the soul—a function which overshadowed its revolutionary meaning. By making the film an outward projection of psychological events, expressionist staging symbolized—much more strikingly than did the device of a framing story—that general retreat into a shell which occurred in postwar Germany. It is not accidental that, as long as this collective process was effective, odd gestures and settings in an expressionist or similar style marked many a conspicuous film. *Variety,* of 1925, showed the final traces of them. Owing to their stereotyped character, these settings and gestures were like some familiar street sign—"Men at Work," for instance. Only here the lettering was different. The sign read: "Soul at Work."

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After a thorough propaganda campaign culminating in the puzzling poster "You must become Caligari," Decla released the film in February 1920 in the Berlin Marmorhaus. Among the press reviews—they were unanimous in praising *Caligari* as the first work of art on the screen—that of *Vorwärts,* the leading Social Democratic Party organ, distinguished itself by utter absurdity. It commented upon the film's final scene, in which the director of the asylum promises to heal Francis, with the words: "This film is also morally invulnerable inasmuch as it evokes sympathy for the mentally diseased, and comprehension for the self-sacrificing activity of the psychiatrists and attendants." Instead of recognizing that Francis' attack against an odious authority harmonized with the Party's own antiauthoritarian doctrine, *Vorwärts* preferred to pass off authority itself as a paragon of progressive virtues. It was always the same psychological mechanism: the rationalized middle-class propensities of the Social Democrats interfering with their rational socialist designs. While the Germans were too close to *Caligari* to appraise its symptomatic value, the French realized that this film was more than just an exceptional film. They coined the term *"Caligarisme"* and applied it to a postwar world seemingly all upside down; which, at any rate, proves that they sensed the film's bearing on the structure of society. The New York *première* of *Caligari,* in April 1921, firmly established its world fame. But apart from giving rise to stray imitations and serving as a yardstick for artistic endeavors, this "most widely discussed film of the time" never seriously influenced the course of the American or French cinema. It stood out alone like a monolith.

Caligari shows the "Soul at Work." On what adventures does the revolutionized soul embark? The narrative and pictorial elements of the film gravitate toward two opposite poles. One can be labeled "Authority," or, more explicitly, "Tyranny." The theme of tyranny, with which the authors were obsessed, pervades the screen from beginning to end. Swivel chairs of enormous height symbolize the superiority of the city officials turning on them, and, similarly, the gigantic back of the chair in Alan's attic testifies to the invisible presence of powers that have their grip on him. Staircases reinforce the effect of the furniture: numerous steps ascend to police headquarters, and in the lunatic asylum itself no less than three parallel flights of stairs are called upon to mark Dr. Caligari's position at the top of the hierarchy. That the film succeeds in picturing him as a tyrant figure of the stamp of Homunculus and Lubitsch's Henry VIII is

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substantiated by a most illuminating statement in Joseph Freeman's novel, *Never Call Retreat.* Its hero, a Viennese professor of history, tells of his life in a German concentration camp where, after being tortured, he is thrown into a cell: "Lying alone in that cell, I thought of Dr. Caligari; then, without transition, of the Emperor Valentinian, master of the Roman world, who took great delight in imposing the death sentence for slight or imaginary offenses. This Caesar's favorite expressions were: 'Strike off his head!'—'Burn him alive!'—'Let him be beaten with clubs till he expires!' I thought what a genuine twentieth-century ruler the emperor was, and promptly fell asleep." This dreamlike reasoning penetrates Dr. Caligari to the core by conceiving him as a counterpart of Valentinian and a premonition of Hitler. Caligari is a very specific premonition in the sense that he uses hypnotic power to force his will upon his tool—a technique foreshadowing, in content and purpose, that manipulation of the soul which Hitler was the first to practice on a gigantic scale. Even though, at the time of *Caligari,* the motif of the masterful hypnotizer was not unknown on the screen—it played a prominent role in the American film *Trilby,* shown in Berlin during the war—nothing in their environment invited the two authors to feature it. They must have been driven by one of those dark impulses which, stemming from the slowly moving foundations of a people's life, sometimes engender true visions.

One should expect the pole opposing that of tyranny to be the pole of freedom; for it was doubtless their love of freedom which made Janowitz and Mayer disclose the nature of tyranny. Now this counterpole is the rallying-point of elements pertaining to the fair—the fair with its rows of tents, its confused crowds besieging them, and its diversity of thrilling amusements. Here Francis and Alan happily join the swarm of onlookers; here, on the scene of his triumphs, Dr. Caligari is finally trapped. In their attempts to define the character of a fair, literary sources repeatedly evoke the memory of Babel and Babylon alike. A seventeenth-century pamphlet describes the noise typical of a fair as "such a distracted noise that you would think Babel not comparable to it," and, almost two hundred years later, a young English poet feels enthusiastic about "that Babylon of booths—the Fair." The manner in which such Biblical images insert themselves unmistakably characterizes the fair as an enclave of anarchy in the sphere of entertainment. This accounts for its eternal attractiveness. For adults it is a regression into childhood days, in which games and serious affairs are identical, real and

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imagined things mingle, and anarchical desires aimlessly test infinite possibilities. By means of this regression the adult escapes a civilization which tends to overgrow and starve out the chaos of instincts—escapes it to restore that chaos upon which civilization nevertheless rests.

Significantly, most fair scenes in *Caligari* open with a small iris-in exhibiting an organ-grinder whose arm constantly rotates, and, behind him, the top of a merry-go-round which never ceases its circular movement. The circle here becomes a symbol of chaos. While freedom resembles a river, chaos resembles a whirlpool. Forgetful of self, one may plunge into chaos; one cannot move on in it. That the two authors selected a fair with its liberties as contrast to the oppressions of Caligari betrays the flaw in their revolutionary aspirations. Much as they longed for freedom, they were apparently incapable of imagining its contours. There is something Bohemian in their conception; it seems the product of naïve idealism rather than of true insight. But it might be said that the fair faithfully reflected the chaotic condition of postwar Germany.

Whether intentionally or not, *Caligari* exposes the soul wavering between tyranny and chaos, and facing a desperate situation: any escape from tyranny seems to throw it into a state of utter confusion. Quite logically, the film spreads an all-pervading atmosphere of horror. Like the Nazi world, that of *Caligari* overflows with sinister portents, acts of terror, and outbursts of panic. The equation of horror and hopelessness comes to a climax in the final episode which pretends to re-establish normal life. Except for the ambiguous figure of the director and the shadowy members of his staff, normality realizes itself through the crowd of insane moving in their bizarre surroundings. The normal as a madhouse: frustration could not be pictured more finally. And in this film, as well as in *Homunculus,* is unleashed a strong sadism and an appetite for destruction. The reappearance of these traits on the screen once more testifies to their prominence in the German collective soul.

Technical peculiarities betray peculiarities of meaning. In *Caligari* methods begin to assert themselves which belong among the special properties of German film technique. *Caligari* initiates a long procession of 100 per cent studio-made films. Whereas, for instance, the Swedes at that time went to great pains to capture the actual appearance of a snowstorm or a wood, the German directors, at least until 1924, were so infatuated with indoor effects that they built up whole landscapes within the studio walls. They preferred

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the command of an artificial universe to dependence upon a haphazard outer world. Their withdrawal into the studio was part of the general retreat into a shell. Once the Germans had determined to seek shelter within the soul, they could not well allow the screen to explore that very reality which they abandoned. This explains the conspicuous role of architecture after *Caligari*—a role that has struck many an observer. "It is of the utmost importance," Paul Rotha remarks in a survey of the postwar period, "to grasp the significant part played by the architect in the development of the German cinema." How could it be otherwise? The architect's façades and rooms were not merely backgrounds, but hieroglyphs. They expressed the structure of the soul in terms of space.

Caligari also mobilizes light. It is a lighting device which enables the spectators to watch the murder of Alan without seeing it; what they see, on the wall of the student's attic, is the shadow of Cesare stabbing that of Alan. Such devices developed into a specialty of the German studios. Jean Cassou credits the Germans with having invented a "laboratory-made fairy illumination," and Harry Alan Potamkin considers the handling of the light in the German film its "major contribution to the cinema." This emphasis upon light can be traced to an experiment Max Reinhardt made on the stage shortly before *Caligari*. In his *mise-en-scène* of Sorge's prewar drama *The Beggar* (*Der Bettler*)—one of the earliest and most vigorous manifestations of expressionism—he substituted for normal settings imaginary ones created by means of lighting effects. Reinhardt doubtless introduced these effects to be true to the drama's style. The analogy to the films of the postwar period is obvious: it was their expressionist nature which impelled many a German director of photography to breed shadows as rampant as weeds and associate ethereal phantoms with strangely lit arabesques or faces. These efforts were designed to bathe all scenery in an unearthly illumination marking it as scenery of the soul.

The attempt made in *Caligari* to co-ordinate settings, players, lighting, and action is symptomatic of the sense of structural organization which, from this film on, manifests itself on the German screen. Rotha coins the term "studio constructivism" to characterize "that curious air of completeness, of finality, that surrounds each product of the German studios." But organizational completeness can be achieved only if the material to be organized does not object to it. (The ability of the Germans to organize themselves owes much to their longing for submission.) Since reality is essentially incalcu-

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lable and therefore demands to be observed rather than commanded, realism on the screen and total organization exclude each other. Through their "studio constructivism" no less than their lighting the German films revealed that they dealt with unreal events displayed in a sphere basically controllable.

In the course of a visit to Paris about six years after the *première* of *Caligari,* Janowitz called on Count Etienne de Beaumont in his old city residence, where he lived among Louis Seize furniture and Picassos. The Count voiced his admiration of *Caligari,* terming it "as fascinating and abstruse as the German soul." He continued: "Now the time has come for the German soul to speak, Monsieur. The French soul spoke more than a century ago, in the Revolution, and you have been mute. . . . Now we are waiting for what you have to impart to us, to the world."

The Count did not have long to wait.

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Theater Chronicle

SOMETHING ABOUT THE WEATHER

THE FATAL WEAKNESS. *By George Kelly. Royale Theater*
CRAIG'S WIFE. *By George Kelly. Playhouse Theater.*
BORN YESTERDAY. *By Garson Kanin. Lyceum Theater.*
THE KEY. *By Ramon Sender. Knickerbocker Theater.*

GEORGE KELLY is the unique case of a writer who is a box-office success, an esoteric excitement, and a name utterly unregarded by the serious intellectual public, which imagines, in all probability, that he is George Kaufman. About twenty-five years ago he wrote three plays, *The Show-Off, The Torch-Bearers,* and *Craig's Wife,* which have been filed away in the memories of such veteran dramatic critics as Joseph Wood Krutch as superior but normal examples of American realism. Today he is being discovered by *Theatre Arts Monthly,* while independently and indeed irrelevantly, Ina Claire is playing in his *The Fatal Weakness* and Judith Evelyn has opened in a revival of *Craig's Wife,* to audiences whose aesthetic faculties have settled gluttonously in the stomach and whose sole anxiety is the gain or loss of *a good evening's entertainment.*

This after-dinner sluggishness on the part of his public must explain the fact that he has been allowed to pass unremarked, for he is the queerest writer on view in America. His plays, though they are set in drawing rooms, are not polite comedies; though they make a fetish of observation, they are not realistic; though they are performed by actors, their complete cast of characters is not listed on the program, their real heroes and heroines being glasses of water, pocketbooks, telephones, and after-dinner coffee-cups. It is difficult to describe a George Kelly play to anyone who has not seen several, simply because it is not like anything else while on the surface it resembles every play one has ever been to.

The curtain goes up on what is recognizable as a drawing room; a recognizable Irish maid comes in and begins to set things straight on the tables. The telephone rings; the maid answers it. Soon the lady of the house appears, a plausible matron in a girdle; before long, her husband is on the stage, a hearty, successful American businessman. He pecks her on the cheek; they start to discuss some family matter or local event: someone is expected on a train, the drama league is giving a play, the man across the street has married a new wife. A plot begins to form:

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the wife is jealous of the bride across the street, she is to play the leading role in the amateur theatricals, she opens an anonymous letter which tells her that her husband is being unfaithful to her with an osteopath out near the Merrick Memorial, she reads in the paper that a man her husband plays poker with on Willow Avenue has just been found dead with his wife. The play continues. The widow from across the way brings over a bunch of roses; the daughter, whose child goes to progressive school, drops in to report a quarrel with her husband; a woman friend calls and cannot make up her mind whether or not to dine at the golf club; the telephone keeps ringing; the maid fetches a glass of water. Meanwhile, the plot moves forward: the husband asks his wife for a divorce, or breaks an expensive ornament, or has a heart-attack from seeing his wife on the stage. An event has happened, and the playgoer, when the curtain drops on his first George Kelly play, may notice nothing unusual, except that there has been rather a lot of stage business, and that something about the story seems not quite resolved.

It takes a second or a third George Kelly play for the spectator to perceive, with the horror he remembers from dreams, that the stage business is everything. "Tell them to say something, Nelly," shrieks the directress, Mrs. Pampinelli, in *The Torch-Bearers,* during a humiliating pause in her production, when the amateur actors sit frozen on the stage waiting for the prop fountain pen that nobody has remembered to put on the desk. "Anything at all! Something about the weather!" Mr. Kelly, as a playwright, has taken Mrs. Pampinelli's advice. The George Kelly play is, in essence, a long ad-lib. Its subject is inanity. Stage-time here, like life-time, is an interminable gap which must be bridged by desperate conversational maneuvers, remarks about the weather, the time of day, vital statistics, golf scores, menus, clothes, train schedules, people's addresses ("I don't know where all this rain is coming from. . . . You can't tell, it might not be raining in Albany. . . . Aren't those roses lovely? . . . I heard her telling Miss Austen she's got over two hundred rose bushes in her garden. . . . 2214, that must be out near the lake. . . . I think there's nothing in the world so exhausting as train-riding. . . . Have you got the time?"). This gabble is the chorus which speaks the meaning of the play; and like a chorus it has its pantomimic expression in a compulsive dance of pocketbooks, pencils, fancywork, glasses of water, cigarettes, hats, timetables, and newspapers. The pocketbook is the leader of this chorus. This "accessory," with its self-possessed air of indefinable value, its bulging, flappy, serviceable exterior, and its obscene interior jumble of scraps and bits, is the prime repository of concern here. The loss of one of these vital objects is the subject of one of Mr. Kelly's early vaudeville plays; and though it never again assumes such open thematic prominence, the heroine's pocketbook is always resting on a lower shelf of the audience's mind. All action halts

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on the stage while the heroine fumbles in it, opens it or closes it, loses it, finds it; the heroine's maid does not feel that it is safe to leave the stage without telling her mistress that she has put her pocketbook in the drawer. The maids in Mr. Kelly's plays have a kind of weight and portentousness that does not derive from the plot, to which they make no contribution. Their masters and mistresses dally with them in obsessive conversation; offstage maids answering offstage telephones are greeted ceremoniously by name ("Hello, Selina, this is Mrs. Espenshade"). They are laden with gravity because they are the servants of the objects which are the plays' gods; they tend the telephones, the tables, the cigarette boxes, the suitcases; they know the time of day and carry in the inevitable glass of water, reverently, like a communion cup; they have devoted their lives to the weather report and the evening news. Mr. Kelly's heroines have come and gone; Ina Claire has succeeded Tallulah Bankhead and Chrystal Herene; but the Irish maid, Miss Mary Gildea, who is acting in *The Fatal Weakness,* was answering the door in *The Torch-Bearers* in 1922, in *Craig's Wife* in 1925, in *Here Comes the Bridegroom* in 1917, in *The Deep Mrs. Sykes* in 1945. Presumably, Mr. Kelly, like his own matrons, "would not know what to do without her."

Early in Mr. Kelly's career, this pedantry of ceremonial and vacuous busyness was related to the official subjects of his plays. In *The Show-Off,* the hero is a ritualistic greeter who lives on small talk, idle boasts, and gratuitous lies; in *Craig's Wife,* the heroine is a house-proud woman who lives through her furniture and will not let her husband smoke in the parlor. Both of these people are mad; they are monsters in the Jonsonian manner; a human trait has been carried in them to the point of inhumanity. But they have at any rate a consistency of character that respects the conventions of the human personality; their personalities are overdeveloped but intact. Mrs. Craig is in love with her house, but she is not a house; Aubrey Piper is a compulsive stream of words, but he is also a man who listens to them. In *The Deep Mrs. Sykes* and *The Fatal Weakness,* however, character has become utterly disassociated, and it is hard to say whether this is an advance or a regression. In these plays, type with its simplicities disappears. One lady may be designated as jealous or proud of her intuition, and the other as romantic, but these traits are weak, stunted, undeveloped, like rudimentary organs of character that have not been able to complete their growth, or like vestigial remains of some extinct race of beings that went by the name of humanity. The personalities of these late heroines are fluctuating and discontinuous. With complexity comes a loss of stability. Emotion with these characters is a kind of bird-mimicry of emotion; and, like amateur actors, they cannot hold a pattern. Mrs. Sykes wobbles between jealousy, masochism, and mediumistic vanity, while Mrs. Espenshade, who is supposed to be a romantic nature, cannot remember for five minutes to

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feel regret for the infidelity of her husband. The people acquire strange names, as though they were queer botanical specimens, outside ordinary classification. Motive, so prominent in Mrs. Craig, has vanished, naturally enough, in this incoherence of personality; motion replaces it, a kind of nervous twitching of the will which survives the death of the character: Mrs. Sykes hatches a series of plots that have no conceivable object; Mrs. Espenshade energetically gathers evidence for a divorce that she has no wish to obtain. Curiosity is the only incentive that remains to these women, their friends, and their servants, curiosity of the kind called idle, that is, curiosity without motive or concern, a senseless twitching of the intellect. It fastens as readily on the affairs of strangers as on the affairs of friends, on an address, a birthplace, a telephone number, or an item in the morning paper. It shows itself most singularly in a pointless interest in the clock; there is not a play of George Kelly's in which the characters do not ask the time of each other, as though this knowledge were a pressing necessity. The passion for exact and irrelevant information is not a mere function of leisure here. The husbands, as well as the servants, participate in this acquisitive literalness. "I've been out in Milwaukee visiting my family," says Mrs. Sykes. "Milwaukee, Wisconsin, you mean?" asks a gentleman visitor. "Yes," answers Mrs. Sykes, "I have a mother and two brothers out there." Mrs. Craig's pride in possessions reappears as the mental activity of all the Kelly characters; it is something fierce and prehensile, a purely animal trait. But it has also developed pathos. It becomes an attempt to possess a void. In these last plays, the American family is seen as a nomadic integer, lost in time and space, inquiring, placing, dating, its only impulse a locative one, its brain an empty map on which, several times a day, using hearsay or direct information, it marks a point and draws a line to it. The plots in these late plays falter, a technical failure which, however, has its own appropriateness, for the plots take on the aspect of deceptively well-marked roads that trail off ineffectually in the wilderness of chaos.

This sense of the American family as floating placeless in its solid living-room is intensified by the fact that the Kelly play is set in no recognizable city and yet always in a different city and a city so particularized that it cannot be every city, so that the spectator's mind as he watches travels hurriedly from Scarsdale to Cleveland, from Philadelphia to Rochester, from Chicago to Hartford, searching for the residence of Mr. Oswald Sykes. In the same way, the class locus of Mr. Kelly's families is by no means definite. Except in the case of *The Show-Off,* where the family is lower middle class, the stage directions always specify a "comfortable room suggestive of good circumstance," "gorgeous gold-colored rugs . . . rich brocaded satins," "a handsome little armchair, upholstered in buff," etcetera; yet the habit-ridden family which

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is discovered in this setting would seem more at home in less opulent circumstances—Mrs. Craig, for example, is really inconceivable as a great lady with a staff of three house-servants, while she is quite easy to imagine as a woman who does her own work. There is a continual tension between the spectator's sociological memory and Mr. Kelly's taste in decoration which also keeps the Kelly family constantly on the move.

And here the question enters of how far conscious selection and intelligence have directed Mr. Kelly's work. The printed versions of his plays are prefaced by little gnomic sayings, quotations from himself, which imply that he is under the impression that he is writing problem plays. In *Behold the Bridegroom,* he did write a problem play about the modern girl who, having loved many men, is incapable of the love of one; in *Reflected Glory,* he treats the actress as a problem and concludes that the life of the entertainer is incompatible with the life of love. But even here the glass of water, the pocketbook, the maid, and the wristwatch intrude on these commonplaces, just as, in the family plays, other commonplaces out of sentimental drama plop into the glass of water. It is possible that Mr. Kelly's best effects are nervous tics which, in the course of years, have encroached more and more upon the territory of his plays, pushing the plot to one side, in the same way that the nervous tics of his characters have left them no room for feeling: Mrs. Espenshade, trying on a white hat with a veil for her husband's wedding, is diverted from her "natural" emotions. It seems probable indeed that the conscious and voluntary drive of Mr. Kelly's talent is, like his social plots, an avenue of platitude that misdirects his material. Yet, as in the case of the *naif* painters, his very faults, the crudity of his conceptions, the innocence of his allegories, become part of the subject, and, while distorting it, add to its grace. The distinction between form and content vanishes; Mr. Kelly's phrasing, now stiff, now soft and mawkish, sinks like a wax into the wooden images he is creating. He remains an oddity, a manifestation of nature, from which he cannot be disengaged, as a free artist can, for judgment.

Born Yesterday, by Garson Kanin, the smash-hit comedy that pimps for progressivism, brings sadistic farce and a *PM* editorial into closer association than one would have thought possible. The little people's spokesman here is a *New Republic* writer with glasses and a set of Tom Paine who undertakes, for pay, the education of a gangster's mistress. The unsuspecting enemy of the people is swindled out of his girl and his private papers, not to speak of his money, and the curtain falls on a victory for democracy. Coming out boldly against people who push other people around, the play is ready with its own night-stick, borrowed from George Kaufman, whenever truth or integrity of characterization

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tries to read its bill of rights. The infantile blonde and the big, rich, mindless thug do, at one moment, make a true picture of brute violence and pathos, very much like the scene in *Frankenstein* where the sentimental monster by the pond unwittingly kills the child that attracts it. Violence is not this play's enemy, but its *alter ego,* and this moment symbolizes Mr. Kanin's own aggressive and tender approach to political innocence quite as aptly as a page of *PM* type.

View magazine, under the name of the *Theater Ubu,* has begun a series of avant-garde evenings in the theater. Ramon Sender's *The Key* was presented recently in a comic style so robust and vigorously American as to disconcert some avant-garde sections in the audience which had counted, apparently, on a less amused and more "amusing" evening. The acting, particularly Miss Mary Welch's, had a wonderful gaiety and bounce, an energetic directness that is never felt today in the professional theater. This suggests that real acting, like real poetry and fiction, has become the property of amateurs, that is, of people who are not doing it for a living. The actors here were professionals, but they did *The Key* under unprofessional conditions, with improvised scenery and costumes, insufficient rehearsals, and to an audience for which the play was not a performance but a party, in short, an unprofessional audience. *The Key* is a ferocious comedy about avarice and sex. With its stock types and loose structure, it too had something artless, negligent, and spontaneous about it, as though it were a scenario for a modern *commedia dell'arte.*

There are drinks and dancing, and the next production is to be *La Putain Respectueuse* of Sartre.

MARY MCCARTHY

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Henry Moore

HENRY MOORE, *the British sculptor whose large one-man show recently opened at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, is generally accepted today as one of the international leaders in his art. His exhibition is the largest ever held in America for a living British artist: fifty-eight sculptures in stone, wood, bronze, and concrete; forty-eight drawings; and his two London air-raid shelter sketch books. After the New York showing the same work will be exhibited at the Art Institute of Chicago during April and May, and at the San Francisco Museum of Fine Arts from June 15 until August 15.*

The following talk does not pretend to be verbatim, but is composed from several formal and informal discussions with the artist.

"Perhaps that's what makes Picasso's work often seem capricious: a conflict between an interest in the approach illustrated by archaic art and the art of primitive peoples, and a respect for the Mediterranean tradition. At any rate, as I look back, I am very conscious of such a conflict throughout my own work, particularly since I went to Italy first in 1925 on a traveling scholarship. Before that time I had associated Classical and Renaissance art with academism and those plaster casts I had to copy at the Leeds School of Art and in the Royal College of Art in London. In fact when I learned that my traveling scholarship should be spent in Italy I at once pleaded to have it rearranged for Paris. But nothing could be done; no financial arrangements could be made to permit it; I had to go to Italy against my will. But thank goodness now I did go.

"For about six months after my return I was never more miserable in my life. Six months' exposure to the masterworks of European art which I saw on my trip had stirred up a violent conflict with my previous ideals. I couldn't seem to shake off the new impressions, or make use of them without denying all I had devoutly believed in before. I found myself helpless and unable to work. Then gradually I began to find my way out of my quandary in the direction of my earlier interests. I came back to ancient Mexican art in the British Museum. I came across an illustration of the 'Chacmool' discovered at Chichen Itza in a German publication—and its curious reclining posture attracted me—

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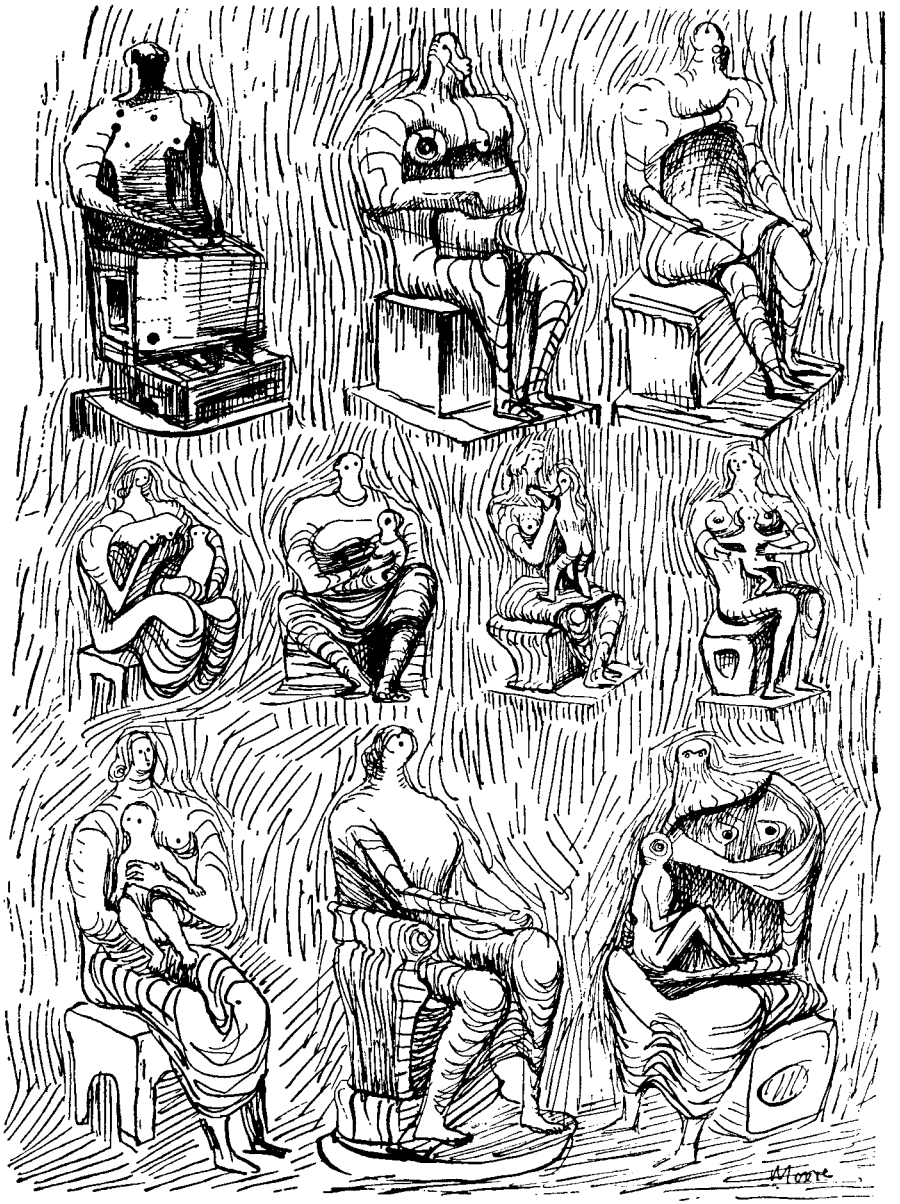

HENRY MOORE: Drawing. Ink.

Courtesy of the Buchholz Gallery
(Collection of Mr. Frederick A. P. Zimmermann)

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not lying on its side, but on its back with its head twisted around. Still the effects of that trip never really faded. But until my *Shelter Drawings* during the war I never seemed to feel free to use what I learned on that trip to Italy in my art—to mix the Mediterranean approach comfortably with my interest in the more elementary concept of archaic and primitive peoples. I feel the conflict still exists in me. And I ask myself is this conflict what makes things happen, or will a synthesis eventually derive? And does all date from this conflict which developed in Italy?—

"Actually Roger Fry's *Vision and Design* was the most lucky discovery for me. I came on it by chance while looking for another book in the Leeds Reference Library. Fry in his essay on *Negro Sculpture* stressed the 'three-dimensional realization' that characterized African art and its 'truth to material.' More, Fry opened the way to other books and to the realization of the British Museum. That was really the beginning.

"My father had always been very opposed to the idea of my being an artist. He had begun as a farmer, doing whatever a boy of nine does in becoming a farmer—scaring crows, I suppose—but later had turned to coal mining. He educated himself: knew the whole of Shakespeare, taught himself engineering to the point where he could have become manager of the mine in which he worked. His eyes, however, grew bad; he never became blind, but then his sight was poor enough to interfere with his further advancement. He wanted me to do what my older brother, Raymond, and sister, Mary, had done: to go to York Training School to become a teacher with a secure livelihood.

"I had always wanted to become a sculptor—at least since I was about ten. However, my first art teacher at Castleford upset me a great deal; she said I drew figures 'with feet like tassels.' I recall exactly what she referred to: figures with feet in the air, like early Gothic drawings—suspended in the air, not connected with the earth. This upset me terribly. But she was succeeded by a Miss Gostick who became my ally in the argument with my father which persisted from my fourteenth to my eighteenth year.

"In 1916 I joined the Army—went to France, was slightly gassed at the Battle of Cambrai and invalided home. On recovering I was given a course at Aldershot and became a bayonet instructor.

"It was in those two years of war that I broke finally away from parental domination which had been very strong. My old friend, Miss Gostick, found out about ex-servicemen's grants. With her help I applied and received one for the Leeds School of Art. This was understood from the outset merely to be a first step. London was the goal. But the only way to get to London was to take the Board of Education examinations and to win a scholarship. Finally I won a Royal Exhibition to the Royal College of Art in London.

"Leeds School was very proficient in teaching tricks of getting

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through examinations. The instruction concentrated on modeling busts in the most academic fashion conceivable. But in the small town of Adle nearby there were some of the earliest examples of Romanesque in England which opened up the whole affair for me. Then Fry's *Vision and Design*; then the British Museum.

"For the first three months in London I was in a daze of excitement. One room after another in the British Museum took my enthusiasm. The Royal College of Art meant nothing in comparison. Every Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday I would go to the British Museum. But not till after three months did things begin to settle into any pattern of reality for me. Till then everything was wonderful—a new world at every turn.

"That is the value of the British Museum: you have everything before you; you are free to try to find your own way and, after a while, to find what appeals to you most. And after the first excitement it was the art of ancient Mexico that spoke to me most—except perhaps Romanesque, or early Norman. And I admit clearly and frankly that early Mexican art formed my views of carving as much as anything I could do.

"But my aims as a 'student' were directly at odds with my taste in sculpture. Already, even here a conflict had set in. And for a considerable while after my discovery of the archaic sculpture in the British Museum there was a bitter struggle within me, on the one hand, between the need to follow my course at college in order to get a teacher's diploma and, on the other, the desire to work freely at what appealed most to me in sculpture. At one point I was seriously considering giving up college and working only in the direction that attracted me. But, thank goodness, I somehow came to the realization that academic discipline is valuable. And my need to have a diploma, in order to earn a living, helped.

"I now understand the value of an academic grounding: modeling and drawing from life. All sculptors of the great periods of European art could draw from life, just as well as the painters. With me, at one moment, it was just touch and go. But finally I hit on a sort of compromise arrangement: academic work during the semester, and during the holidays a free rein to the interests I had developed in the British Museum. Mixing the two things enabled one to continue drawing from life as I have always done. And it also allowed me to win my traveling scholarship to Italy on academic grounds.

"There, although I came almost immediately to the Massaccios in Santa Maria del Carmine, I was no more able to use the frescoes directly for my work than I was able to make an accurate copy of the Chacmool from a halftone reproduction. Still, as I see it now, both were to have an equally lasting influence. . . .

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"The Italian trip, as I say, was a turning point. But it was really not until the Blitz in London had passed that I began to realize how deep-rooted the Italian influences had been.

"At the outbreak of the war I had a studio in Devon, not far from Dover. And for the first months of the war I continued to work there undisturbed. In fact, up to the fall of France there were no difficulties in doing sculpture just as before. During those first months, however, nothing happened in the art world of London, no exhibitions or anything of the sort. Then the code gradually became 'to live as usual.' And in 1940 I exhibited the large reclining figure in elm wood, which now belongs to Elizabeth Onslow-Ford, and several small lead figures at the Leicester Galleries. But when France fell and a German invasion of England seemed more than probable, like many others I thought the only thing to do was to try to help directly. I moved back to London and applied at the Chelsea Polytechnic for training in precision-tool making But the training classes were so few in proportion to the numbers of applications that several weeks went by and I heard nothing. Still I felt it was silly to start a large sculpture when at any moment I might have to give it up. So I took up drawing. Months went by, waiting; I went on drawing. Then the air-raids began—and the war from being an awful worry became a real experience. Quite against what I expected I found myself strangely excited by the bombed buildings, but more still by the unbelievable scenes and life of the underground shelters. I began filling a notebook with drawings—ideas based on London's shelter life. Naturally I could not draw in the shelter itself. I drew from memory on my return home. But the scenes of the shelter world, static figures (asleep)—'reclining figures'—remained vivid in my mind, I felt somehow drawn to it all. Here was something I couldn't help doing. I had previously refused a commission to do war pictures. Now Kenneth Clark saw these and at once got the War Artists Committee to commission ten. I did forty or fifty from which they made their choice. The Tate also took about ten. In all I did about a hundred large drawings and the two shelter sketch books in the Museum Exhibition. I was absorbed in the work for a whole year; I did nothing else.

"Then at Herbert Read's suggestion I undertook to do drawings of miners at work in the coal mines—'Britain's Underground Army,' as they were called—another commission of the War Artists Committee. I went to my home town of Castleford and spent two or three weeks in all down the mine. Yet I did not find it as fruitful a subject as the shelters. The shelter drawings came about after first being moved by the experience of them, whereas the coal-mine drawings were more in the nature of a commission coldly approached. They represent two or three weeks of physical sweat seeing the subject and that number of months of mental sweat trying to be satisfied carrying them out.

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"It was difficult, but something I am glad to have done. I had never willingly drawn male figures before—only as a student in college. Everything I had willingly drawn was female. But here, through these coal-mine drawings, I discovered the male figure and the qualities of the figure in action. As a sculptor I had previously believed only in static forms, that is, forms in repose.

"And in both these subjects I think I could have found sculptural motifs only, if I'd tried to; but at the time I felt a need to accept and interpret a more 'outward' attitude. And here, curiously enough, is where, in looking back, my Italian trip and the Mediterranean tradition came once more to the surface. There was no discarding of those other interests in archaic art and the art of primitive peoples, but rather a clearer tension between this approach and the humanist emphasis. You will perhaps remember my writing you in 1943 that I didn't think that either my shelter or coal-mine drawings would have a very direct or obvious influence on my sculpture when I would get back to it—except, for instance, I might do sculpture using drapery, or perhaps do groups of two or three figures instead of one. As a matter of fact the *Madonna and Child* for Northampton and the later *Family Groups* actually have embodied these features. Still I sometimes wonder if both these and the wartime drawings were not perhaps a temporary resolution of that conflict which caused me those miserable first six months after I had left Massaccio behind in Florence and had once again come within the attraction of the archaic and primitive sculptures of the British Museum."

JAMES JOHNSON SWEENEY

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Books

Observations on Kafka

For all things outside the physical world language can be employed only as a sort of adumbration, but never with even approximate exactitude.—Franz Kafka, *Aphorism* 55.

In *Metamorphosis,** the father of Gregor Samsa, the insect-hero, throws a little red apple which, piercing his son's skin, remains embedded in the wounded flesh. In some such way, the work of a powerful and unexpected artist strikes the social body, which then, with a responsive mechanism more adequate than Gregor's, must seek to adapt itself to the wound. Society, also, sends its phagocytes to the breech, in order to destroy or neutralize the malignant organisms that may have taken their chance to enter. New cells are mortised into a wall of scar tissue that, though it cannot negate the wound's enduring effect, will re-establish the functioning whole.

Of Kafka, we are, thus, first told by those who knew him that he was a man, as we all are. He was a "scrupulously conscientious employee" of the Bohemian state insurance trust, "and his fellow workers liked him" (Kate Flores). Like most of us, "at one time Kafka drew up a utopian plan for a workers' collective society." However, he found office routine "monotonous" and "hateful." Seeking usual relief, he "took up athletics . . . and became an excellent swimmer, rider, and oarsman. He went boating on the Moldau, and hiked in the woods with his friends." Difficulties with family, work, and money—who has not had them?—led him to postpone and finally break off a project of marriage. The war, as wars always do, for everyone, "shattered all his plans." "The privations of the war, coupled with the strain of earning his living while writing . . . told on Kafka's health." He became seriously ill, and died.

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* Metamorphosis. *By Franz Kafka. Vanguard Press.* $2.75.
The Great Wall of China. *By Franz Kafka. Schocken Books.* $3.00.
The Kafka Problem. *Edited by Angel Flores. New Directions.* $5.00. (All the references I make to critics of Kafka are based on essays published in this book.)

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John Urzidil recalls personal traits no more eccentric than required to constitute anyone an individual. Kafka "detested noise, and although far from being phlegmatic, he never got excited. He was fond of understatement." He had "an enigmatic smile," and "always seemed to be somewhat embarrassed." But he was "quiet, gradual, serene, free from adjuncts, difficult to comprehend sometimes, not always easy to manage. . . . " Oskar Baum remembers his character as "indescribably charming," full of "kindliness and readiness for sympathetic consideration." Ludwig Hardt saw how he was respected by his "little hunchbacked servant-girl," and how his "laughter was something to hear."

The strangeness, which nevertheless lingers in the personal recollections, however edited by love or propriety, is further denatured by absorption into a familiar system. Kafka is a Jew, the eternal alien, and "from his Jewish soul he has said more in this simple tale about the universal situation of Jewry than can be gleaned from a hundred scientific treatises" (Max Brod). Kafka was psychologically maladjusted, with an anxiety neurosis, and a father fixation which turned his life into a continuous struggle to "escape from father" (Frederick J. Hoffman—and Kafka himself).

His curious, chaste stories are discovered, in review, to fit into traditional patterns with which we are currently at ease. W. H. Auden reminds us that the novels "belong to one of the oldest literary genres, The Quest," and are only another variant of what we have always known in fairy story, legend, epic, and allegory. Lienhard Bergel argues that *The Burrow* is a metaphysical treatise on the classical theme of "the relationship between mind and reality, between the effort of man to construct a rational world . . . and the outside world which is dominated by irrationality." Jean Wahl and Albert Camus find a poetic expression of Kierkegaard's theology, which John Kelly brings up to date in the terminology of the neo-Kierkegaardian, Karl Barth. Edwin Berry Burgum completes the list by convincing himself that Kafka's "diseased personality," his "conduct typical of German life generally under the Weimar Republic," and his attitude which "anticipates the psychology of fascism" once more confirm the politics of Stalinism (1942-3 vintage). "We [we Stalinists, presumably] who are more happily situated than Kafka can draw from his novels the desolate pleasure that there too we should have gone if we had been unable to believe in the potentialities of democracy and the common man."

This process of cultural absorption is, as in all such cases, cor-

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related with the wavelike expansion of the new artist's audience. At first there are a few friends, then scattered outsiders who welcome the first public appearance. Some among these friends and outsiders are not content with having recognized. The news must be told, the swelling begins. The avant-garde is alerted, little magazines publish and comment, a clique forms. A professor here and there revises a lecture, and a semiprofessional publisher decides to take a chance. The stirring is felt internationally, imitations pay their substantial flattery, and the general public, if it is not able to face the original, becomes familiar with chic references and with devices borrowed for the mass market.

It would be wrong to object to this inevitable double process. The absorption of the new and seemingly unique into the functioning structure of values and categories is, simply, a phase of what it means to have a civilization. The expansion of the audience deprives the first-nighters only of a somewhat snobbish proprietary joy. There is, naturally, a cost. Through the process the original work loses freshness, and becomes, to some degree, obscured and degraded. It is smothered in the categories, and exploited in the course of the expansion.

In Burgum's essay ("The Bankruptcy of Faith"), for example, there is hardly a shadow left of Kafka. The vulgarity, insensitivity, and political baseness of the critic have succeeded in blanketing even the reflection of light. The product is a crude Stalinist exercise, for which a thousand others than Kafka could be substituted as ostensible main theme. Burgum can corrupt facts as readily as values or insights. Though Kafka was born and lived in the Austrian Empire, and died just as the Weimar Republic got started, that does not at all prevent Burgum, in the interest of his political theses, from identifying Kafka's career and personality with Weimar. Nor does he hesitate to find "cynical" the "observation of life" by this writer of almost excessive gentleness and sympathy.

In other essays, also, though with better will and a less gross distortion, Kafka and his writings become in varying measure obscured. Like the hundred portraits of Walkowitz, exhibited a couple of seasons ago at the Brooklyn Museum, we see the painter more than the subject: nearly all of the essayists find it appropriate to turn their criticism of Kafka into treatises in the field of their own interests—theology or naturalism or myth or the unconscious.

As for the exploitation, that too is unavoidable, whether in direct form by entrepreneurs who can make money, or pseudo artists

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who can pick up a new angle for Broadway or Hollywood; or, more indirectly, by early discoverers who stake out exclusive claims, and bring indignant suit against all later arrivals who may wish to share the pleasures of comment, or merely to enjoy. Kafka, like most original artists in our time, serves as blood serum for critics, and there is not enough to go around.

II

When Dante, in the *Convivio* and in his Letter to Can Grande, describes his poetry as "polysemous," with literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogic meaning levels, he at the same time insists that the literal meaning comes first in comprehension. This priority is, in fact, required by the Thomist principle that there is nothing in the mind that was not first in the senses. In his poetry, therefore, the literal meaning is complete in its own terms, its own logic. Through the multivalence of his imagery, and the character of the dramatic and narrative situations, the various allegorical meanings emerge naturally —"analogously"—out of the literal. The allegorical meanings, moreover, are themselves complete in their own terms and their own logic, all of them dimensions of a world-view which has a beginning and development and end, which answers the questions that it raises.

Kafka's writings are also, as everyone feels at once, polysemous. If we try to follow Dante's prescript, and begin our comprehension at the literal level of meaning, we recover many qualities that are often neglected in the account of the interpreters, who invariably start at one of the allegorical levels. We notice the fluid prose, with its remarkable freedom from literary devices or allusions. We can enjoy quite simply the play of fancy, with its odd combinations that range from the blithe or ludicrous to the grimly grotesque. We discover, at unpredictable and always surprising intervals, sudden pulses of tenderness that warm us through the lattice of a dog's endless investigations or a woodchuck's burrowed maze or the dreadful sorrows of a cockroach. And especially we find on almost every page, even on those from which we derive also the most somber impressions, a wit—lively, restless, gay. The wit is never a joke that can be told or an epigram that can be repeated out of frame. It is the mentally unexpected, the half-reversal of an idea, the interjection of the routine and usual into the absurd.

There is also (though perhaps I record here a deficiency of my own) a certain monotony, a sense of occasional boredom that weights

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the long paragraphs which are too barely stripped of usual human concerns.

At the literal level, it is as if Kafka pours on the body of the world a kind of acid, which dissolves all the connective tissue, leaving only the discrete elements of an organism. He then selects from among the elements according to an arbitrary will of his own, and re-unites these by ligaments spun out of his own spirit. The laws, therefore, of the world as we normally know it, do not, or need not hold. The relations of space, time, causality, identity, the divisions between dream and waking, reality and illusion, all the categories through which we stabilize—and thus also in part hide—the flux of experience are dissolved, or distorted. The ego's "reality principle" is suspended.

In the new world, so created, a journey between two villages (*A Common Confusion*) can take ten minutes one day, ten hours the next morning, and one second in the afternoon. Bouncing balls (*Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor*) can attach themselves, like a little dog, to a master. A mouse singer can worry over her relations with her people (*Josephine, the Songstress*), a man's father can will him a half-cat-half-lamb (*A Sport*), and the dead can rise (*The Hunter Gracchus* or *The Married Couple*). Laws of gravity need not apply (as for the attendants in *The Castle,* or the floating dogs in *Investigations of a Dog*); bridges can turn to look over their shoulders (*The Bridge*). When, in that world, a man changes into a bug (as in *Metamorphosis*), or a rodent (or is it a rodent?) debates internally, with the logical rigor of a rationalist metaphysician, the strategies of his defense (as in *The Burrow*), it does not seem accurate to discount what is happening by immediately interpreting in terms of fable, fantasy, or illusion. I remember reading somewhere once about a Patagonian tribe the adults of which on occasion were parrots. Anthropologists, trying to explain this, had interpreted by saying that the natives "felt like" parrots or imagined that "their souls entered into parrots" or something of the sort. However, these explanations seem to have had no relevance to what the natives meant, which was just that they were parrots. The requirements of the rules by which we carve from the flux what we accept as the real world do not permit a man, overnight, to become an insect, or time to lengthen abruptly or contract. But these rules do not apply, or apply only in part, to the Kafkan world, just as the rules by which common sense organizes visual experience do not apply, or apply only in part, to the deliberately created visible reality of a cubist painting.

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The *elements* of Kafka's world are taken from experience—from where else could they come?—but, with the standard connections dissolved, it is as if the parts of a complex radio set had been linked by a unique hookup, and the set tuned thereby to frequencies outside the range of mass-production models. However, in the new world that Kafka re-assembles, many of the familiar elements also are missing, like the gears still outside the case of a watch which a child has put back together.

John Urzidil observes how little of "nature" appears in Kafka's writings. In many stories there is almost nothing material, solid, substantial—no trees or flowers or sky or hills, no houses or floors or streets. Even where matter does appear, it is never filled in, merely suggested or vaguely indicated, or covered with a dream haze as in *The Castle* or *The Trial*. The bodies of persons, whether human or animal, are not described; often—as in *The Burrow* or *Metamorphosis*—even the species of an insect or beast is not made known.

Nor is there "character" in the usual sense. We never learn more than severely abstracted planes of a psyche, objectified without roots. No one in Kafka "develops"; what the persons are and do is not caused or motivated in the manner either of real life or of the novel of character and action.

This means, then, that Kafka makes no attempt to imitate, or display, the material, the natural world—that is, the causal world. Its most substantial elements are omitted. The very category of causality, key ligament which binds together the natural world, reality as we normally understand it, is reduced to a minimum strand. This reduction contrasts entirely with the role of purely formal categories in Kafka's world. The formal categories—the axioms of logic which, by itself, is empty of matter, is a connective for elements purely of the mind, the spirit—are distended much beyond the normal. Everything in this absurd world of Kafka's is rational, tied by syllogistic tendons that could, often, be translated into a most refined and rigorous formal symbolism.

If we now further add the fact that most of Kafka's writings are either fragmentary or unfinished, it is plain that Dante's injunction cannot apply. The literal meaning in Kafka is not an adequate starting point; it is not complete or sufficient in its own terms. The truth is rather that, however resolutely we try to remain at the literal in reading Kafka, we always find ourselves being driven and teased and thrust beyond it. The most commonplace phrase, appearing as it will in an irreconcilable context, compels the mind to spin

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away. We are always walking at the edge of a cliff.

III

At the allegorical level, it seems to me an error to try to reach a single, consistent, and final interpretation of Kafka's meaning. Metaphysical, sociological, theological, Freudian interpretations do not exclude each other. On the contrary, a special quality of the writing, I feel, is to prevent any single consistent interpretation at the same time that it compels us to seek interpretation. Just as we become convinced that the problem is, say, theological, a shifted phrase makes that suddenly ridiculous: we are pulled back to the literal, or pushed into the social or psychoanalytic.

If the Castle means, or can be felt at times to mean, the incommunicable God of Abraham and Kierkegaard, it can mean also the bureaucratized State—or simply human society, or the projected father image, or the unknowable real of a Kantian sort of metaphysics. For that matter, can it not mean also reality as presented by Science, Science thought of as a church with its ritualistic priests, and its formulas intoned as the incomprehensible explanation of all that is?

We wrong Kafka by turning him into a philosopher or theologian or social scientist. The explicit "aphorisms" included in *The Great Wall of China* are not distinguished in rational content. His writings, undoubtedly, are much concerned with philosophical and related problems, but about these he felt complexly and deeply rather than thought adequately. Indeed, Kafka's stories and novels are, perhaps primarily, in the manner of poems, an expression of mood and feeling. The suggested ideational structures—never more than suggested, never completed—are not sovereign, but serve to develop the feeling.

The dominant feeling, or cluster of feelings, we can roughly identify as *anxiety,* a universal, all-sided anxiety. Everything, or nearly everything, meets in this engulfing anxiety: the anxious insecurity of the neurotic psyche; the homelessness of the Jew; the emptiness of the metaphysical desert decreed by the attendant ideologies of modern science; the cosmic anxiety or "care" of Kierkegaard and Existence philosophy; the isolation of the individual in the bureaucratized social mechanism; the care of the traveler unsure of where he is traveling, the reasoner who has lost his axioms. Every effort to overcome the anxiety only renews it: the Great Wall can never be completed; the truth about the Giant Mole cannot be established; the investigating dog will never have his question answered; no clear

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message will be received from the Castle; the Court will not render a plain decision; the defenses of the Burrow can always be pierced . . . —"Oh, how many business calls come to nothing, and yet one must keep going."

Tied to this expressed mood is a meaning so close to the surface of Kafka's created world as to be itself almost literally rather than allegorically given. Let us, remembering that in Kafka's world the conventional links of the standard world do not exist, consider *The Trial* and *The Castle* together. The hero arrives in the following condition: he feels that he has a purpose or goal; he does not know what this may be; he nevertheless must try to reach it, though, under these circumstances, his efforts may obviously just as well negate as further his unrevealed purpose (so far, *The Castle*); he also knows that he must die, that he is condemned to death; presumably, therefore, he must be guilty from the point of view of whoever or whatever is responsible for his being in this world; he feels he must try to discover what the basis of his guilt may be; but the guilt cannot be traced to any specifiable or individual crime, other than the fact that he does exist (thus, *The Trial*).

Once we have abandoned the automatic acceptance of custom and institutionalized behavior, and the stylized conscious beliefs of religious or philosophical ideology, it is clear that the condition of Kafka's hero is not in the least fantastic or peculiar. It is exactly and literally the human condition. It is the spiritual situation in which every man who has achieved self-awareness finds himself, and it sets the basic problem for which religion, metaphysics, and myth must provide an answer—must, because the situation is intolerable. Kafka, however, neither accepts nor finds any answer. "Then the strangest questions are asked, which no human being could answer: Why there is only one such animal, why I rather than anybody else should own it, whether there was ever an animal like it before and what would happen if it died, whether it feels lonely, why it has no children, what it is called, etc. I never trouble to answer, but confine myself without further explanation to exhibiting my possession."

It is not really that Kafka doesn't "trouble to answer"; he troubles about little else. But he is unable to answer, as if from a schizoid defect, or ambivalence, of will. This ambivalence, like the anxiety, inseparable from the anxiety, pervades his work (as, it would seem, his life). Together they mark how normal for our time are Kafka's neuroses, how representative his singular writings, how near this opaque glass is to being a mirror for souls.

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IV

Even as a child, Kafka "found all the outward forms of the Jewish religion ludicrous" (Kate Flores). He was contemptuous of the "few trifling rituals" (his words) observed by his father. Though affianced for years to a girl who loved him, he did not marry. In later life, when friends were trying to bring him back to Judaism, he was repelled by the elaborate Chassidic rites. He became a strict vegetarian, abstaining even from fish. In his writings, we have seen, the causal, material world dissolves. Physical reality he declares to be evil, altogether evil. "The martyrs do not underestimate the body; they cause it to be elevated on the cross. . . . What we call the physical world is the evil in the spiritual one." The physical loathesomeness of the insect Gregor Samsa is pointed enough. Sexual intercourse, when it is referred to at all, is presented brutally by Kafka—the barmaid on the dirty floor behind the bar.

These symptoms, from both life and work, could be multiplied. They can be explained psychologically. From another point of view, they show Kafka to belong to the ever-recurring tradition of Manichaeism (even the vegetarianism was a rule of the original Manichaeans). His world is split by the absolute Manichaean division into Good and Evil, which is identified with the division between Light and Darkness, Spirit and Matter ("In a light that is fierce and strong one can see the world dissolve"). As with all Manichaeans, the ambivalence remains: he longs for Matter, for the evil natural social world, at the same time that he denies it; he is appalled by Spirit even while he must seek it absolutely.

Kafka takes from Judaism and Protestantism not by any means at random, but just what will reinforce the underlying Manichaeism: not the ritual (a manifestation of Darkness and Evil), but the unnameable God of Whom no (material) image can be made; the utterly spiritual Being of Protestantism, whose creatures must break the statues and the stained-glass windows.

All sensuous pleasures are all-evil, Mani declared. The Perfect, the Manichaean Elect, must wholly deny the world—deny the state, the family, marriage, the body, matter.

As a Manichaean, Kafka's aim must be to create an art that is purely spiritual, in which matter is altogether eliminated.

Manichaeism, however, is a heresy, perhaps the great heresy. I do not mean a heresy only in a formal theological sense, but a human heresy. From the human standpoint, the purely spiritual is nothing.

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In terms of pure spirit, knowledge is necessarily empty, action necessarily meaningless. For humanity, the dualism between matter and spirit cannot be absolute. God must have become Incarnate.

Most plainly of all, Manichaeism is an aesthetic heresy. An art work is matter. Form and spirit can exist in art only as shining through or upon or out of matter. The ancient Jews were right: since their God was pure Spirit, and not to be incarnate, there could be no art.

Kafka thus set himself an impossible task—as in life he, like all neurotics, set himself impossible tasks, set them for himself precisely because it was certain in advance that they were impossible. "This is the problem: . . . to attain a view of life (and . . . to convince others of it in writing), in which life, while retaining its natural full-bodied rise and fall, would simultaneously be recognized no less clearly as a nothing. . . . Hammering a table together is really hammering a table together to him, but at the same time it is nothing." If that is the problem, then it is insoluble. And Kafka found it in fact to be insoluble. That is why he could not finish stories—how could there be an end to what cannot even be begun?

And that is why Kafka was compelled to direct his executors to destroy all his written work. In terms of his purpose all of it was blasphemy and idolatry, it was totally a failure. But his purpose was false, and therefore Brod was just in his decision to disregard the instructions. Though Kafka wrote in order to deny the meaning of human experience, by failing he succeeded in art's actual aim of illuminating experience. We therefore refuse him permission to annihilate the record.

Kafka realized, long before his death, that his task was impossible, and that there was in truth only one consistent conclusion. In the strange story (*A Sport*) from which I have already quoted, and in which he seems to be imaging himself in the painful form of the half-cat-half-lamb, he ends:

"Perhaps the knife of the butcher would be a release for this animal; but as it is a legacy I must deny it that. So it must wait until the breath voluntarily leaves its body, even though it sometimes gazes at me with a look of human understanding, challenging me to do the thing of which both of us are thinking."

JAMES BURNHAM

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FICTION CHRONICLE

THE STATE OF NATURE. *By Paul Goodman. Vanguard.* $2.50.
A ROOM ON THE ROUTE. *By Godfrey Blunden. Lippincott.* $3.00.
THE WAYWARD BUS. *By John Steinbeck. Viking.* $2.75.
UNDER THE VOLCANO. *By Malcolm Lowry. Reynal & Hitchcock.* $3.00.
DARK DOMINION. *By Marianne Hauser. Random House.* $2.50.
THIRTY STORIES. *By Kay Boyle. Simon and Schuster.* $3.50.

IN SPITE of the fact that most serious fiction of our day reveals great inner distress and maladjustment, there still runs through these tormented pages what Symonds, in speaking of Boccaccio, called a "bourgeois felicity," indicated by, as much as anything else, the lack of radical skepticism and the general absence of the speculative temperament. So great is the intellectual apathy that one hopes for something better from a controversialist like Paul Goodman; if it is not always possible to agree with his enthusiasms, at least one knows he has a few. Unfortunately, his recent novel, *The State of Nature,* is the least rewarding of all his work I am familiar with. The book contains every paradox: the scenes are much too brief and sketchy and yet the writing, sentence by sentence, is turgid; the style shifts from the feigned simplicity of satire to the vague profundity of a sermon; its subjects are innumerable—war, violence, the individual in a hostile society, family insecurity and the need for love—but at no point does he touch upon these with creative success.

Goodman calls *The State of Nature* a political novel, but it has none of the efforts and, consequently, none of the delights of fiction, neither character nor drama. It is not an essay, since it does not impose upon itself the candor of a position or the logic of defense. However, the miscellaneous character of the book does not disqualify it; instead it is disqualified, in my opinion, simply by its dullness, the very last thing a political and philosophical writer ought to be guilty of. I think Goodman's failure to arouse one's emotions is somewhat connected with his tendency to equate things of unequal value and thereby depreciate both of them. To go the whole way with him one has to be able to hate the mere *bigness* of a ship lying in the Hudson almost as much as one hates war.

There is a kind of mind that can denounce singing commercials and the tastelessness of household furnishings with as much vigor as it denounces totalitarianism; in fact this is the giddy protest most loved by certain "radical" American writers. These writers invariably pose as the custodians of art, but they treat the creative function as a love affair in which the artist, abiding by the rules of love, reciprocates the world's ignorance of his genius by ignorance of the world. I do not say

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Goodman goes that far; but what he does have in common with the other attitude is a shrill arrogance that frequently brings his seriousness into question. In *The State of Nature* one comes away with a single clear impression and that is that Goodman feels the world would be redeemed if it would only listen to him. This oracularity is probably shared by every writer, but it is expressed through the various persuasions of literature, through characters, crucial situations and themes. The nakedness of Goodman's plea for attention, exposed to us in this book without creative illustrations of his point of view and even without a novelistic situation, is the final immodesty, tedious in innocents, but unforgivable in a supposedly complex mind.

It is disheartening to have to report that another political novel, Godfrey Blunden's *A Room on the Route*, which commands none of Goodman's literary sophistication, is nevertheless much more worth reading. The very existence of this novel critical of contemporary Russian life is something of a feat. Such a novel could only be written by a non-Russian, but in a country which does not allow the foreigner to get to know the Russian people the whole novelistic impulse is frustrated. An idea novel, an intellectual exercise like *Darkness at Noon*, might be written far away from the scene, but the traditional novel, showing the day-to-day life of a people, arises out of a leisurely absorption of setting, a certainty of one's characters, and a great store of experience shared with them or their kind. Probably the only person who could produce a fictional criticism of Russian life would be a journalist like Blunden, who is, so far as I can judge, not a sectarian intellectual, but simply an intelligent observer, aware of the former promise of the Revolution and appalled by the results. Apparently the notes for the book were taken in secret while he worked as a newspaper correspondent in Russia. And if one has to say immediately that the book is badly written and awkwardly constructed, is that not inevitable? An experienced novelist would not have been allowed in Russia.

The story concerns some people who live on The Route, a street close to the Kremlin and therefore swarming with political police. Blunden's characters, chosen to give the widest possible picture of Moscow life, are just what you might expect: the despairing wife of an old revolutionary who represents the dignity of the past, a nonintellectual peasant still not completely brutalized, an American girl who married a Communist, numerous party functionaries, some of whom are cowardly cynics and others ruthless bureaucrats to whom ideals are unknown, and then the young Soviet citizens, provincial, bored, and ignorant, to whom all that "Marx-Lenin stuff is dry as dust." The bestiality of existence in the Soviet Union is well portrayed, the horrid living conditions for which a word like *overcrowded* is hopelessly inadequate, the hunger that can, upon occasion, turn into cannibalism,

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the overwork and fear and humorlessness that destroy all human relations. The moral rottenness is, of course, even more horrifying and one might say that the NKVD is the central character in the book, because all people, both the lowly and those on good terms with the authorities, relate tragically to it.

In a book of this sort there are many fascinating accusations and views. One of the most interesting, because it has become one of the Stalinists' greatest ideological weapons, concerns anti-Semitism. (At least there's no anti-Semitism in Russia, one hears every day.) When a Russian woman suggests that persecution of the Jews will be the government's next excuse for its failures, the narrator looks surprised. The woman explains, "Innocent foreigner. . . . Do you not know that the Bolsheviks were always identified as Jews? The traitor Trotsky was a Jew. In the Ukraine in 1937 the interrogators beat their victims, crying, 'Confess, Zheed!' " The Red Army is also accused of anti-Semitism. On the question of revolt in Russia, Blunden suggests that it will not come, if at all, from theoretical conflicts with the regime, but from a human process of which even the most ignorant is capable: a recognition of the unendurable present, the horrible now.

I am sorry the author does not use Stalin's name, but instead refers to him as He or the Boss, probably from the notion that this gives him greater meaning as the symbol of terror and authority. However, my opinion is that, in this case, one cannot be too specific.

Perhaps it is not illogical to follow two political books with a word about *The Wayward Bus,* John Steinbeck's insignificant new novel which, in a sexual sense, shows a strange class-consciousness. In this typical Steinbeck fable about an assortment of people who board a bus in California, the middle-class characters are either frigid or meanly repressed, but the lower-class hero, Juan Chicoy, has the *mana* of a sacred bull and the good-hearted tramp, Camille, has mystical powers that drive men crazy. Sexual sparks fly everywhere and the bus stops long enough for a few to ignite in scenes that will attract a wide audience.

Under the Volcano by Malcolm Lowry and *Dark Dominion* by Marianne Hauser appear to be the results of enormous literary labors; one senses immediately the authors' agony of concentration and patience, their endless revisions and elaborations. This poetic, intense, but undramatic writing is often abused as if the care and refinement were the sources of the frequent failures, but I am far from certain that a book like *Dark Dominion* would be better if it were more simply written. It is true that the final effect hardly justifies the author's industry, but at least one respects the scrupulosity of her intentions. However, the honest novel, built upon a lyric imagination, verbal virtuosity, and extraordinary sensibility, is not rare today, particularly among women writers; to a great

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extent we are now in a frozen period in which so many writers have so many virtues—beautiful sentences, delicate emotions, literary integrity—that we no longer notice anything except the common faults—narrow emotional range, fear of the larger moral and intellectual issues, and vagueness. Marianne Hauser's *Dark Dominion* is a perfect casualty in that respect. Her style has a frenetic, overwrought quality that exhausts the reader, but is never vulgar or awkward; when one has said that, there is not much else to remark upon in her novel. It is a drab garment whose main distinction is that it is handmade. The plot concerns an unbalanced girl who marries her psychoanalyst. The story is heavy with symbolic detail and carefully selected moments of psychic revelation, but what the book lacks is precisely psychological interest. All the author's coaxings failed to bring her characters alive and apparently no amount of effort succeeded in giving her inventions the significance she intended.

Malcolm Lowry's *Under the Volcano* contains astonishing and often brilliant images, marvels of description, and much evidence of the long hesitation that results in the triumphant metaphor or adjective. It is an ambitious and expansive novel and probably for that reason Lowry has made his central character, the Consul, an alcoholic in whose mind the past and present remain undifferentiated. The Consul recalls and relives the past even as he is suffering the present. Drummond reported that Ben Jonson had "consumed a whole night in lying looking at his great toe, about which he hath seen Tartars and Turks, Romans and Carthaginians, fight in his imagination. . . . " The description fits the Consul somewhat, though I should say that what we need here is the Consul's great toe, a part of the essential man himself, which Lowry does not quite succeed in giving us. This failure makes us less attentive to the fights in his imagination, even though they are brilliant and extensive.

The most interesting thing about *Under the Volcano* is that in it one returns to the flavor and color of the bohemian Twenties, though the actual date of the action is meant to be, so far as I can tell, 1938 or later. Here, and perhaps for the last time, are the *deraciné,* the lost who wandered to Paris, Africa, and Mexico, who drank all day, quoted poetry, and intended to write books or to make revolutionary films. These people seem to be immediate in Lowry's mind, but to me they have already become exotic and enticingly unreal. One asks himself a thousand unpoetic questions about them: how did they get to be where they are, what do they live on?

In style *Under the Volcano* recalls Djuna Barnes's *Nightwood* and some of the characters, particularly Yvonne, the Consul's wife who was a child star in western pictures, remind one of Fitzgerald. These echoes are not mentioned to discredit Lowry. Indeed they are evidence of the

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completeness of his mood, his identification with the purities and dooms of twenty years ago.

When Kay Boyle became the literary publicist of the French Resistance, she outdid the French themselves by finding heroes everywhere, and not "absurd" ones either. There is no doubt about her sincerity and nothing necessarily disreputable in her attitude toward the war, but her literary equipment was not adequate for these larger themes and as a consequence she has dealt herself a double blow. By retaining in her war fiction much of her old manner and even her typical characters she has not only written some bad stories and novels but has made one doubt her previous work. Some artists are very unlucky: they reach the logical end of their beginnings and thereby perform an act of adverse criticism upon their own work. A bad book can sometimes tell you what was wrong with a reasonably good book by the same person. In *Thirty Stories,* a selection from two decades of her writing, those that hold up best are least stamped with Kay Boyle's peculiar qualities. "Keep Your Pity," along with a horror story like "Your Body Is a Jewel Box" and the very conventional "Natives Don't Cry," seem to me successful, if not outstanding, examples of the contemporary short story. The stories that seem to me least successful are those in which she lays the foundation that later collapses so unmistakably. The typical Kay Boyle characters are heroes and heroines in a fantastic fairy tale. The hero is likely to be a Count or a Baron or, if that isn't available, a plebeian Major. Count Lothar has most of his important qualities. "All the manly, bodily things came alive in his blood when he walked and rang aloud until the echo was heard in every woman's heart that he passed." The princes are waiting for the princess, who is a bit more American, a hard, athletic woman with painted lips who understands the manly creature with a sure instinct. In "Maiden, Maiden" and "Major Alshuster" nothing is at stake except romance, a chivalrous sexual tournament, and the stories have some emotional reality because they aren't pushed too far or taken too seriously. However, when Kay Boyle's people become not only fairy-tale heroes, but military and political ones as well, they are revealed in all their foolishness and we know they were never anything except romantic abstractions. The princess becomes ridiculous when she puts on her Field Service uniform and one cannot quite believe in an underground Lady Higgins. The American war stories, like "The Canals of Mars" which tells of a typical war parting in Pennsylvania Station, are particularly incredible because here the fairy tale, with its fabulous honor and spartan courage, hasn't even the advantage of a foreign setting. We have all been in Pennsylvania Station too many times.

ELIZABETH HARDWICK

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THE GRAMMAR OF COLOR AND FORM

THE HISTORY OF IMPRESSIONISM. *By John Rewald. Simon and Schuster (for The Museum of Modern Art).* $10.

ON THE SPIRITUAL IN ART. *By Wassily Kandinsky (translated by Hilla Rebay). Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation (for The Museum of Non-Objective Painting).* $4.50.

HENRI ROUSSEAU. *By Daniel Catton Rich. Second Edition, Revised. Simon and Schuster (for The Museum of Modern Art).* $2.75.

IMPRESSIONISM has proved itself the most consequential of the efforts of the nineteenth-century painters to reorganize the data of vision—consequential not because of the validity, or even the consistency, of its theories, but rather because of the talents it enlisted. In fact, one of the problems of art history has been to define Impressionism as a method, not merely as a sequence of events. If we choose to call Monet, Sisley, and Pissarro Impressionists, Degas, Manet, and Cézanne are not Impressionists at all.

We had better admit at once that the strength and the weakness of Rewald lie precisely here; that he, of all writers on Impressionist painting, has willingly renounced the attempt to define Impressionism inclusively and has, instead, compiled the fullest, most orderly, most particular record of Impressionist painting between 1855 and 1886. To Rewald history is not an art, not criticism; it is science, and the successful historian in his opinion is the one who remains so close to his texts that he thinks only in the directions they permit. By this scrupulously documented record, then, we know what paintings by Manet the Salon "refused," what Monet and Renoir found together at Argenteuil, exactly what Louis Leroy printed in his famous *Charivari* article on the "Impressionists" on April 25, 1874. If a few of the reproductions in color are acid or hot, the illustrations are innumerable and considerately integrated with the record itself.

All this is useful; in fact indispensable. No longer shall we have to depend upon the letters collected by Venturi, the reminiscences of Duret or Uhde, or the woman's-clubbish evasions of E. A. Jewell. We shall not so readily do without Wilenski's *Modern French Painting,* which, however incoherent or arbitrary, has the venturesome insights against which Rewald has academically protected himself. Wilenski may be cavalier in handling his documents, but within his larger social contexts he suggests more forcefully than Rewald that the technical and aesthetic revolt of the Impressionists against the Salon and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, for example, is a repudiation of the bourgeoisie. And we shall return to Roger Fry for his summary judgment that, in effect, Impressionism implied two changes in painting: "one the result of looking at things from unfamiliar aspects, the other the result of

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noting changes in local color due to different sources of light."

But then the documents themselves are often luminous, and Rewald has quoted an unpublished letter by Pissarro advising a young painter: "Look for the kind of nature that suits your temperament. The motif should be observed more for shape and color than for drawing. There is no need to tighten the form, which can be obtained without that. Precise drawing is dry. . . . Paint the essential character of things, try to convey it by any means whatsoever, without bothering about technique. Use small brush-strokes and try to put down your perceptions immediately. The eye should not be fixed on one point, but should take in everything, while observing the reflections which the colors produce on their surroundings." Rewald's literal record tempers or corrects the impulsive decisions of Wilenski. It places Berthe Morisot more centrally amid the group, along with Bazille, that Bonington of the Impressionists and the painter of them all closest to Degas in his distortion of space. We have all the evidence, too, on the contributions of Boudin and Jongkind, the immediate effect of the Barbizon painters on the Impressionists, the difficulties of Durand-Ruel, and the derivative performance of Manet. After Rewald's history of experiments in bright pigment, atmospheric perspective, luminism, instantaneous harmonies, broken color, and unexpected angles of vision we conclude anew that Impressionism is an event, not a movement, and that the Impressionists might well be identified only as they are in Fantin-Latour's painting of them—*Le Groupe des Batignolles.*

The distinctive Impressionist grammar of color may be opposed to Kandinsky's expressionist grammar of color. The first complete (and reverent) translation of *On the Spiritual in Art*—not so idiomatic as the 1914 translation by Michael Sadler—demonstrates more clearly than the contrasts between the early and late Kandinsky, or between Kandinsky and Bauer, how an art originally devoted to *Stimmung* (translated as Sentiment) has evolved into a grammar of geometry forever in peril of descending from the "spiritual" to the decorative. Kandinsky foresaw this peril; in emancipating the painter from naturalist transcription, or even from abstraction, of objects, the danger, he remarks, is devoting one's art "exclusively to combination of pure color and absolute form." Indeed Kandinsky faced an insoluble dilemma in this emancipation—how, that is, to adjust the "spiritual" to the geometrical, how to avoid mere empty play with forms. Repelled as he was by the vulgarity and "godlessness" of bourgeois naturalism and bourgeois "success," he fell back upon his inner vibrations for which, like Rimbaud, he must find a language. It could not be a language of nature, which is "objective." He must, then, start with the inner vibration, which will determine the choice of the object. In 1912 Kandinsky stated his problem thus: "As we are still

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tightly bound to nature's exterior, we find our forms there. The entire question is how may we accomplish this? How far does our liberty permit us to alter these forms, and what colors may we combine? This may go as far as the feeling of the artist goes." The path, in 1912, lay for Kandinsky between the equally dread possibilities in naturalism (which for him, under the urgency of a "strife towards the beyond," a Faustian will, is only fantasy) and the vacuum of an "entirely abstracted use of color in geometrical form." Even the disintegrations of the cubists were too "objective"; Picasso, he complained, threw himself from one exterior means to another in his constructional dispersions.

The resolution of the problem for Kandinsky came in what he calls his counterpoint, a construction from inner necessities and vibrations in which colors and forms stand in purely internal (and isolated?) relationship independent of objective reality. This is freedom. By a highly theoretical grammar of form and color—warm against cold, yellow against blue, the activity of red against the immobility of green (the bourgeoisie)—Kandinsky anticipates and presses to its limits a dialectic opened some years later by Ozenfant and the Purist abstractionists to determine what feelings and ideas are associated with certain forms and colors. Thus was established for Kandinsky that spiritual counterpoint of color against color, form against form, by which we are released into

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a peace that passeth the understanding of those visitors to the Museum of Non-Objective Painting whose tributes are somewhat shamelessly accumulated as an appendix to this translation ("Really, this Museum is wonderful," "Mattern's painting, 'Abandon,' makes me want to laugh and dance and sing," "They give me a feeling of completion," etc.).

The advantage, of course, is that painting is no longer qualified by "literature." We have in nonobjective painting something remarkably close to the unmotivated response known in the novels of Gide—*l'acte gratuit,* so to speak, in color and form. And in the case of Kandinsky, at least, the lyricism of his inspiration—as in the Black Lines—redeems the execution from decorativeness.

The disadvantages are easier to name—first, a denial of tradition that, in turn, results in a weakened counterpoint, a failing in all expressionism; or again, the extraordinary irresponsibility of this idealism, or alienation from reality, in painting, since the world becomes, as it does in Schopenhauer, only a projection of one's Will and one's Idea. Chiefly there is the objection that might be named Aristotelian: in this kind of painting the "imitation" is limited until the counterpoint is itself an illusion, because its references are all internal; it is too self-contained; there are wanting even the references to the surreal. The general revelation of construction, as Kandinsky calls it, cannot be accomplished fully by a counterpoint isolated from the object; then construction becomes merely improvisation. The larger revelation of construction occurs whenever we "find" our construction in the world of things, whenever there is counterpoint of object against representation, as contrasted with Kandinsky's wholly emancipated internal relationships. For all painters not entirely photographic in intent the object itself becomes an epiphany; there is revealed through it the repertory of forms that constitute the artist's own inner necessity. Thus the abstractionist painting or the disintegrations of cubism—unlike the nonobjective painting—are saved from being decorative. In the phrase of Ozenfant, the Purist: "A fine subject never did anyone any harm." At least the object can rescue us from the synaesthesia of Kandinsky's "purity" in which absolute green becomes the middle notes of the violin, dark blue the cello, or yellow the flourish of trumpets, and all art music. This way lie Huysmans or the more superficial Rimbaud—and Kandinsky himself has invoked Maeterlinck. Necessity, after all, *is* nature, and the painter's counterpoint is finding his own vibration in the object. Besides it is curious that, in contrast to the geometry in recent nonobjective painting, Kandinsky from 1940-1944 seems at times to have returned to a cubist-like dissociation of objective forms; there are unmistakable references to the object, "dispersed" though they may appear. The repertory may have proved more limited than he had hoped. In fact, one doubts the nonobjective resources. Ozenfant said that astonishment works only once.

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Ozenfant was speaking of Picasso, not of the repertory of the good *douanier,* who, as Mr. Rich says in this reprinting of his authoritative and pleasant essay on Rousseau, counterpointed the plane of the dream against the plane of reality. The surrealists have not more advantageously reconciled mental with natural geography. Mr. Rich has analyzed the grammar of this pseudo primitivist: Rousseau's sensitive intervals, his silhouettes, his adjustment of simple planes, his great areas of light, his botanical inspirations, his clarifications small and large, his calm. All these are astonishing, and his subjects, too—the paradise of The Dream. But Rousseau astonishes more than once because his counterpoint is neither impressionist nor isolated, because his anxieties are transformed into gay myth, and because this old angel, as Apollinaire called him, is a painter and always an Inhabitant of Delight. WYLIE SYPHER

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Variety

Report from the Academy

THE CHIEF PURPOSE of the departments of literature in American graduate schools is to teach prospective teachers how to avoid discussing literature. There are several ways of escape. One may collect statistics—a Brown professor has recently been engaged in collecting all the allusions to Edmund Spenser in seventeenth-century European literature. One may assemble "parallel passages" showing, let us say, that Milton was "influenced" by Grotius. More relevantly, one may study the socio-economic background of literature or the lives of the writers. But in recent years, great numbers of graduate scholars have turned to the History of Ideas, proclaiming their freedom from less elevated approaches (in graduate schools one always "approaches"; one does not touch, go into, or pass through).

This movement (or the part of it which I wish to discuss here) depends upon an uneasy alliance between the philosophers and the literary scholars. Since academic philosophy is never very sure about what it can meaningfully concern itself with and is hence continually in search of a subject matter and since literary scholarship can use the methods of philosophy as an approach to literature, each has something to offer the other. The philosophers, however, insist on cracking the whip and in general the literature teachers let them do it.

The most influential figure in the History of Ideas movement has been A. O. Lovejoy of Johns Hopkins, whose *Great Chain of Being* (1936) is taken to be a latter-day Revelation of what constitutes philosophy, scholarship, and criticism in English departments all over the country. The book set crowds of scholars to ransacking European literature in search of "plenitude," "continuity," and "gradation," the three principles of the chain of being.

Lovejoy is the Chairman of the Board of Editors of the *Journal of the History of Ideas;* the other editors are faculty members at Harvard, Columbia, and City College. In his manifesto (see the first issue of the *Journal,* January 1940) Lovejoy laid down certain categories under which literature may be studied. One may, for example, study the influence of philosophers on literature; Melville, let's say, read Plato and consequently assumes a relationship with Plotinus, Ficino, Petrarch, Emerson, Shelley, and Benjamin Jowett. One may look into the influence of science on literature; Melville was influenced by Buffon but (to use the language of professional scholar-

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ship) transmuted the scientist's matter-of-fact prose into the alchemy of art. Or one may look into such concepts as the idea of progress, primitivism, the relation of the individual to society, or the great chain of being itself; if one studies primitivism, for example, Melville may be related to Diogenes, Shakespeare, Thomas Gray, Henry Miller, Coleridge, Jung, and possibly Admiral Byrd. It will be seen that these are "philosophical" approaches, and one effect of applying Lovejoy's categories is to give the impression that all creative writers are really nothing but frustrated philosophers. A graduate student of literature at Yale recently remarked that in his opinion if Melville had only had the advantage of a university education he would have written philosophical treatises instead of novels. As it was, he had to fall back on literary makeshifts, which, of course, have nothing to recommend them except that they are among the most beautiful and exciting symbolic novels of all time. (Melville is at present being processed on a large scale by the graduate schools.)

In the practice of literary scholarship the Lovejoy point of view has been nearly always lugubrious. It has inspired an attitude which ranges from ultrarationalism to sheer schizophrenia: any idea may be taken out of any context, identified by name and date, and compared with any other idea. One loses all sense of the cultural thicket in which an idea actually lives; one loses all sense of the evanescence of ideas as they emerge from the ground swell of emotion and motive. "History" is not a matter of tagging and arranging, nor (for anyone interested in discussing literature) are "ideas" isolatable from art and morality.

Sometimes, because it raises no immediate moral issues, the History of Ideas is not actively harmful. But sometimes it attempts to moralize, and then it is likely to get vicious. Lovejoy's manifesto in the first issue of the *Journal* was immediately followed by an essay of Bertrand Russell's called "Byron and the Modern World," in which Byron's ideas are said to be responsible for Bismarck, the Kaiser, and probably Hitler. "Ideas are the most migratory things in the world," says Lovejoy. They certainly are.

Anyone who understands literature instinctively regards a poem as unique, a thing in itself (though of course he must regard it in other ways too). If he does not do this, how can it ever occur to him that art has reality? How, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, can he *read* the poem or teach anyone else to? But the Historian of Ideas never allows uniqueness. A poem is always like some other poem because they both mention Plato. Similarly, no age is unique. As Lovejoy said in trying to minimize contemporary knowledge about the unconscious, every age exaggerates the uniqueness of its discoveries. Some Historians of Ideas will tell you that there is nothing in Freud which can't be found in Robert Burton. This refusal to rec-

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cgnize the uniqueness as well as the similarity of ages relieves the scholar of the irksome task of directly studying his own age. He finds it much easier to study some other age, to sum it up in a neat formulation, and then, perhaps in passing, to "compare" it with our own age.

But there is another reason why the scholars fail to look at the present. The student of Dante, says Lovejoy, should create a "frame of reference" consisting of the dominant ideas of Dante's time so that the reader will be able to read the *Divine Comedy* with at least some of the knowledge which a contemporary of Dante could bring to the poem. No one can deny that with due qualification this kind of scholarship is helpful. But the frame-of-reference approach shows us why the scholars do not generally try to deal with our own culture and why they fail badly when they do. Kafka has an already-created frame of reference; namely, modern culture, Life, or Reality. But *this* frame of reference is so real that the scholar does not recognize it as a possible context in which to

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study literature.

How does the modern world look through graduate school windows? We have at least one answer in "The Downfall of Oratory," an essay by the influential Shakespeare scholar E. E. Stoll, of the University of Minnesota (*Journal of the History of Ideas,* January 1946). The argument is a familiar one in graduate schools. Milton thought that poetry was public speech; Wordsworth said that a poet was a man speaking to men; poetry is therefore oratory. In other ages, oratory has flourished; these were good ages. In our age oratory does not flourish; this is a bad age. We discern so far two propositions, but the relation between them is never explained. Why was there once a widely supported first-rate literature? "Because," says Professor Stoll, "there was an audience." This is the crucial fact and one would expect an educator to ask, How can we create a modern audience through education?—the great and desperate task. But this question does not occur to Mr. Stoll. He proceeds to blame the disintegration of Western Society on the fatal tendency of democracy to produce anarchic cliques of exclusive and anti-oratorical aristocrats, such as the Junior League and the readers of advanced magazines, a situation which was happily though temporarily avoided by the salubrious uniformity imposed by fascism in Germany and Italy. "The gap is widening!" proclaims Mr. Stoll. The highbrow is ever farther divorced from the "ordinary public," and it is all the fault of the Vanguard, who are radicals, proletarians, sans-culottes, rowdies, and outlaws guilty of anarchy, impudicity, and brutality. The Vanguard are those who entertain the "superficial and immature conception that a thinker is an original, a rebel, or iconoclast" ("thinker" is graduate-schoolese for "artist" or "writer"). Who are these Vanguardists? Well, there are Joyce, Gertrude Stein, MacLeish, Ransom, and poets "such as Messrs. Crane, Cummings, and Crosby." Possibly Ibsen was the first thinker to be "deliberately baffling." At any rate he belongs to the Vanguard, as we see by comparing him with Cicero, Chatham, and Bossuet (anyone may be compared with anyone).

After attacking the "highbrow weeklies" and pointing out that *Ulysses* has no beginning and no end and may be read backwards, Mr. Stoll vilifies the Vanguard for excluding the "common, ordinarily educated man." He assumes here, of course, that there *is* a modern audience for "oratory." He was right the first time: there is no more than a desperately small audience, either for Wordsworth or Joyce, though our culture seems to go on wistfully making citadels of privilege out of our graduate schools in the hope that they will do something about it.

Stoll's essay betrays a nearly complete ignorance of modern, and indeed all, cultural problems; it shows not the slightest conception of the methods which the problems call for. It is written by a man who (in this essay at least)

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shuffles the counters of his trade, for whom the whole of logico-poetic discourse consists of a few "ideas" and the names and dates which buzz in the head of the perennial Ph.D. candidate.

The reader perceives from Stoll's essay that in the *Journal of the History of Ideas,* one may praise fascism, take a swipe at the "foreign-born" in American politics, vilify modern writers (from Joyce to Crosby), and in general substitute free association and anathema for argument, and the *Journal* will not bat an eye. There is neither counterstatement nor endorsement by the editors, there is no notice that the opinions are Mr. Stoll's own, and the magazine has no recognizable policy on controversial issues which would allow one to deduce its attitude toward what it publishes.

It is significant that Lovejoy prefaced his 1940 manifesto, which dealt with purely academic techniques, with a statement that these were the author's own opinions. Apparently one must be responsible within the academy; outside of it, one need not be.

RICHARD CHASE

Lumpen Intellectuals

IN THE WAKE of the American occupation of Italy there appeared a new "social institution" and a new word in the Italian vocabulary: the *sciuscià*—an Italianized version of the American "shoeshine boys," little uprooted, homeless vagabonds, little *lumpen,* shining shoes, stealing, ready to sell

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everything, from cigarettes to their younger sisters.

Similarly, the cultural scene of Europe has been overrun by its own *sciuscià*—let us call them *lumpen* intellectuals. One of them has written a best-seller that has just been translated. I refer to Curzio Malaparte and his *Kaputt*.

The book itself shall not be considered here—it has already been widely discussed. My concern is with the author, as a phenomenon and symptom.

Malaparte was among the very early followers of Mussolini. A member of the diplomatic corps with many and varied connections, he brought valuable support to the as yet mainly plebeian ranks of the budding Fascist party. At the time of the murder of Matteotti, it was Malaparte who in a widely quoted article stated that from now on Mussolini should no longer be considered a simple mortal but must be ranked among the godlike. . . .

When fascism took power and became institutionalized and boring, Malaparte appeared in Paris, and pretending to be an anti-fascist, enjoyed the favors of French literary society. Daniel Halevy was then among his most ardent sponsors. *Coup d'Etat,* written in this period, was an international success. But then Malaparte returned to Italy, only to be imprisoned, probably for certain careless remarks. When released, he became an intimate of Ciano and other high dignitaries of the regime, and later became war correspondent for the *Corriere de la Sera* for almost the entire period of Italy's participation in the war.

From November 1943 to March 1946, Malaparte served as a liaison officer for the American High Command in Italy. . . .

Kaputt seeks to portray the inhumanity of the Nazis and their war, the corruption of Italian Fascist society. But Malaparte, who chronicles rottenness and decay, is not an outside observer but a part of the ghastly world which he comprehends so well. He belongs to the fauna that has grown on the rotting soil of Europe in the interwar years.

In the preface to the French, and undoubtedly also the Italian edition of *Kaputt*—but significantly omitted from the American translation—there appears a statement by the author in which he proclaims that from now on he wishes to be considered as belonging to that group of European writers who are "decidedly oriented toward a marxist critique of the problems of modern culture and civilization." Of course, by "marxist" Malaparte means Stalinist. He has, indeed, joined the Communist Party and is in the front ranks of the advocates of a new Italian Communist culture. As the French say, *la plaisanterie est de taille.*

Were this an isolated phenomenon, it wouldn't need more than

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a passing reference. But the world of journalism and politics is swamped with Malapartes. This former camp-follower of Mussolini, now drawn into the orbit of Stalinism, expresses a cultural trend worth considering.

William Barrett recounted some time ago in the pages of this magazine his shock in realizing, upon his arrival in Italy from North Africa, how the corruption and decay that the foreign conquerors had brought to their colonial possessions had now infected their own domain. Within the slum that is Europe today, there also appears an appropriate slum culture. *Lumpen* intellectuals match the *lumpen* proletariat, and the underworld of the black market has its counter-

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part in an underworld of the intellect. In a world where everyone puts on a disguise, it is difficult to distinguish the false from the true, to distinguish the values that are experienced from those that have been adopted as a protective cloak or as a means of salesmanship for this or that "cause." Values are on the market; they are bought and sold at current prices and the bidder is assured that he gets the best for his money—an article that seems almost genuine. The writer is valued for his technical skill like the scribe in an oriental bazaar, he is the publicity agent for made-to-order values.

Periods of decay and of turmoil are ideal breeding grounds for the *condottiere* of literature. The general confusion, the loss of the sense of integration of personality and values opens the doors for all corruption. When Communist leaders are found assiduously attending High Mass, when erstwhile revolutionaries outdo the most inveterate chauvinists in strident patriotic screams, when former army deserters proclaim the "mission of our army and navy" and talk of the great patriotic heritage, when Aragon sings in the accents of Charles Maurras, "communism" becomes indeed the last refuge of the scoundrel.

There are the vulgar *lumpen* who write for the daily press and shout at meetings. And then there are those who quote Proust and James Joyce. It is to this lot that Malaparte belongs. This former darling of the diplomatic corps—is still a darling of the diplomatic corps.

Pietro Aretino wrote a life of Santa Catharina de Siena; Mala-

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parte falls into ecstasies over the exquisitely shaped hands of a Russian tank driver and compares them to the hands of Picasso and Stradivarius. Aretino was paid by the princes and the cardinals; the Malapartes are the hirelings of more impersonal entities called "parties" and traffic in "ideologies." But there is the same mixture of intellectuality, artistic refinement, and moral depravity—and above all the same effrontery. Malaparte needed a good deal of the latter to announce his conversion to the "marxist mode of analysis."

The most prevalent "ideology" in Europe today is that of cynicism and nihilism. The old values of Western civilization have been junked and from the heap of rubbish now glares a gigantic sign: FOR SALE. Among the intelligentsia, communism once was the ideology of somewhat timid college professors with shining pant seats and of habitués of literary cafés. It has now become the religion of those who frequent the most fashionable black-market restaurants. The Party has made a job and an assignment of what was once a human cause. Ideologies are produced at so much per word. Those familiar with the finer points of modern literature are paid extra. Malaparte and other former playboys of the Western world are highly priced in the East.

This is not to suggest that most European intellectuals have been involved in the collapse of values that occurs before our eyes, nor that purely material reasons motivate all those who have capitulated. Moral cowardice, failure of nerve, and worship of myths play a considerable part. Yet, whatever the causes, the disease of Stalinism has made amazing inroads into modern thought. To denounce it becomes a simple act of public hygiene.

LOUIS CLAIR

Better to Burn?*

O Miss Anne Finch (or maybe Mrs.)
Knows we can't depend on kisses
As the way to happy ending
Or the means to understanding;
And our society refuses
To let the parents be the choosers;
But those on whom the choice does fall
Sometimes cannot tell at all
What their needs or natures be
And find their lives a misery.
So the symbolic wedding ring
Often does not mean a thing
And infidelity runs rife
While everyday is simply strife
And everyone loves another's mate
And looks upon his own with hate.

II

Now every thinking person can
See this is an awful plan
And though the facts bear out dear Freud
They scarcely leave one overjoyed.
But what can we do, if not depend
On taste or custom as a friend?
How can we manage to keep pace
With whirling news and time and space?
Shall we have an infant child?
It seems a panacea mild
'Gainst world irruption and dismay—
Well, if we won't, or can't, or may
Not, still we must not give up hope
But find a way with which to cope
With all the burdens of our lives,
Our quirks, our sins, our husbands, wives;

* This is a review of *Essay on Marriage* by Anne Finch, a book of verse (Rinehart, $1.00).

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The thing to do is not retreat
Into fear or self-defeat,
But face up bravely, grasp the oar
And row as if we meant to soar.
Rich and meaningful'll be our acts
If we make a theory to fit the facts!

III

Four-footed lines and couplet rhymes
Have served good poets other times;
Butler, Prior, Gay and Swift,
Miss Finch's models, had more gift;
A modern pattern, much her better
Is Wystan Auden's *New Year Letter,*
And as for marriage, much more wit
's in Marianne Moore's poem on it.
Rinehart & Company at a dollar
Publish her with hue and holler,
But suchlike wisdom, by them cherished
Has for years in monthlies perished,
And her thesis is the kernel
Of a piece an issue in the
Ladies' Home Journal,
Couched like hers in terms ideal,
Dealing with the really real,
Fearing not our blacker side,
Exposing what we wish to hide,
Facing problems right and left,
At the newest terms adept.
Her theme may be "as old as man"
But her verse is just an "also ran,"
Easily read, though hardly written,
No work profound by inwit bitten,
And all in all it's just as well
Her *Essay on Marriage* will not sell.

GERTRUDE BUCKMAN

CORRECTION: A review of Victor Serge's *The Long Dusk* in the last issue of PR stated, incorrectly, that Serge had been a member of the Executive of the Communist International. Our apologies to Mr. Serge and to our readers for this misstatement.

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